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THE JOURNAL OF A
PORTING NOMAD
J. T. STUDLEY

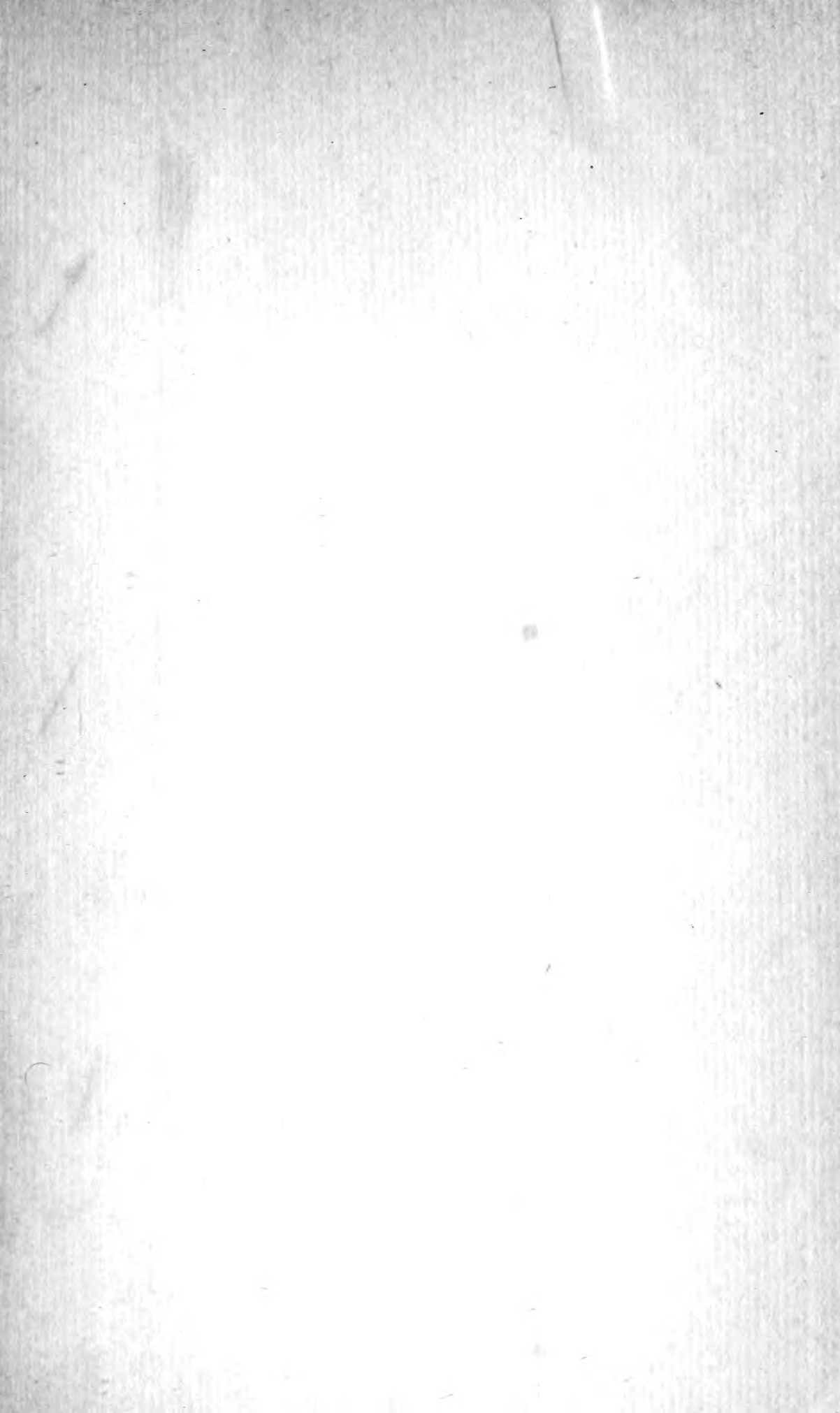
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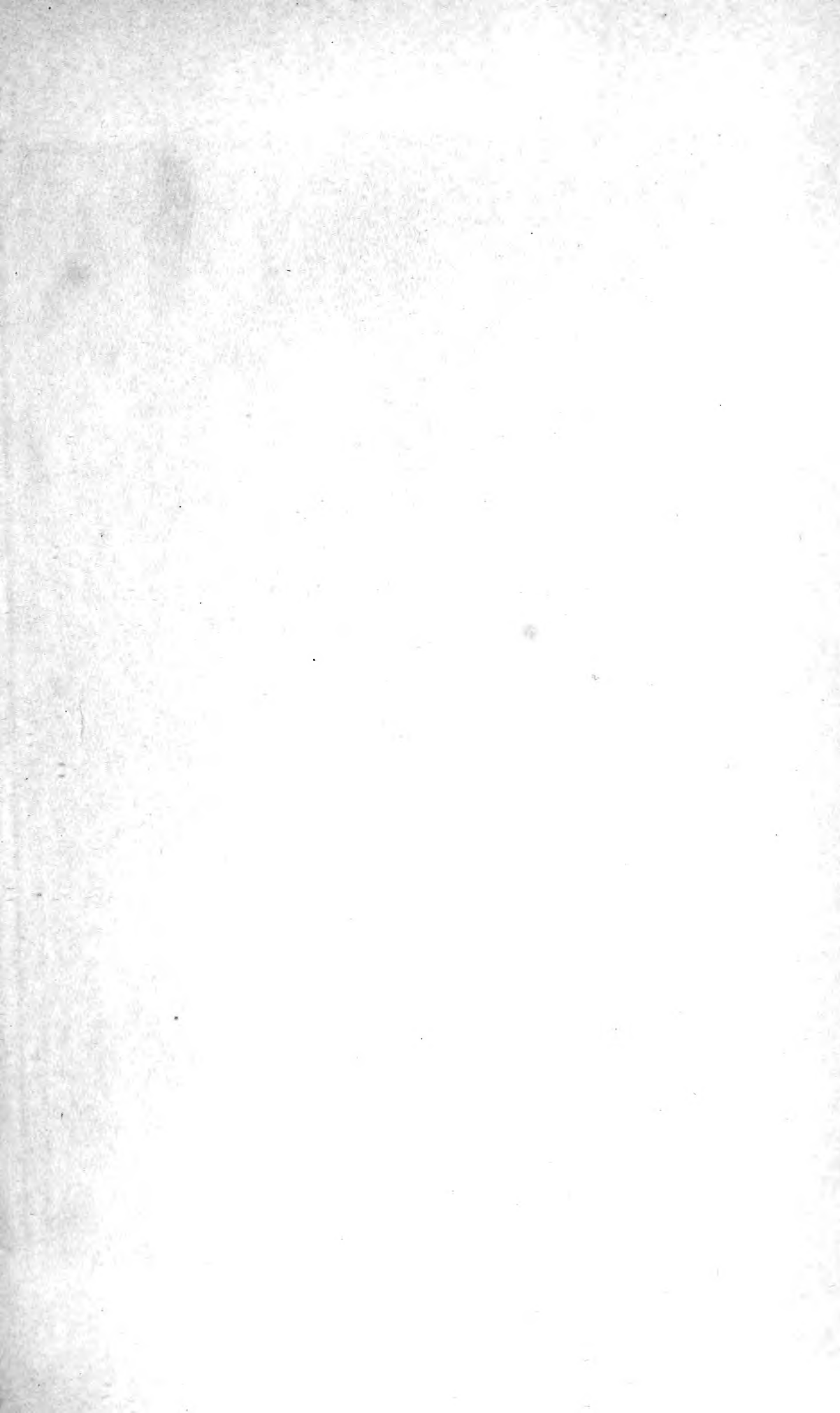
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THE JOURNAL OF A
SPORTING NOMAD





J. D. Andrey.

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THE JOURNAL OF A SPORTING NOMAD

BY J. T. STUDLEY :::::

WITH THIRTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS

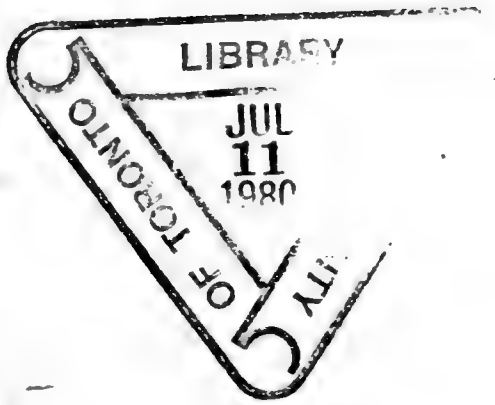
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DEDICATION
TO MY SON DEREK



PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE never, even in my wildest moments, aspired to be a literary person, a fact which the reader will no doubt perceive if he has the patience to peruse these pages. The manuscript has been written up from old journals, and was not originally intended for publication. I have, however, been persuaded to bring out the book, and have done my utmost to write only what I know to be true. I can but hope that it may interest my readers. Its production would have been completely beyond my powers had I not received the greatest help and advice from my friends Miss Agnes Herbert and Mr. W. E. W. Collins, to whom I take this opportunity of tendering my sincere thanks.

THE AUTHOR.



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THE JOURNAL OF A
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CHAPTER I

Newfoundland—Caribou

The strong life that never knows harness ;
The wilds where the caribou call ;
The freshness, the freedom, the farness—
O God ! how I'm stuck on it all.—R. W. SERVICE.

NEWFOUNDLAND was the scene of my first big-game hunting expedition—after caribou. Being quite inexperienced, I bought a heterogeneous collection of supplies from one of the stores in St. John's, the capital of the country, where, to use a colloquialism, you could purchase anything from a needle to an anchor.

My next move was to engage an Irishman, said to know well the part where I proposed to hunt, and he assisted me materially in getting the outfit together, and also in preventing my taking along a medley of utterly useless things.



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I had brought out from England a canteen, containing plates, cups and saucers, knives, and a nest of boxes for tea, sugar, etc., which proved useful enough in its way, but a seasoned hunter would not burden himself with anything like it. Most awkward to carry, whether on a man's back or packed on a horse, it usually ended in some one's hand, gripped by the strap.

For the benefit of those who have never made a hunting trip I would suggest that they acquired (and as a rule these things can be obtained almost as cheaply at, or near, the starting-place for a shoot, as in England) articles of enamelled iron. Such are light, clean, and generally satisfactory. Of course the things taken have to be considered in the light of available transport, and regulated by the number of people in the party. One man going with an Indian guide and a cook-campman into a country like Newfoundland, where everything has to be packed on men's shoulders—for when I was there railroads were not—must content himself with the barest necessities, and those of the most practical form.

A word of advice concerning aluminium may not be out of place here. Avoid it like the plague! A cup of this material when full is by way of becoming too hot to hold, while a plate is equally liable to be carried away by a gust of wind, to be perforated by an ordinary sharp knife, or to crumple out of shape like a sheet of

Newfoundland

blotting-paper. In short, lightness, the sole recommendation of this most aggravating composition, by no means counter-balances its numerous defects. Were I going into a place where neither horses nor trains were available, my camping outfit would consist of something like the following: A big iron kettle, a full-sized galvanized bucket, a big enamelled iron teapot, two plates for each person, one ordinary, and one soup plate of enamelled iron. Knives and forks, an extra pair, a large iron spoon, enamelled mugs with handles, one for each person, a large coffee-pot, one big and one small saucepan, two frying-pans, two first-class axes, a butcher's knife or two, some big needles and thread, and matches in an air-tight box. This really is the minimum you can do with.

The tent may be a ten foot by eight foot cotton affair, weighing only some eight pounds, costing in the U.S.A. about 12 dollars. Even this is not indispensable; for on this my first trip we had but a lean-to, which gradually evolved into a triangular arrangement, made of spruce boughs and poles. I cannot, however, say that it was comfort. The smoke nearly smothered us when the wind was at all strong, and the rain and snow drifted into every corner. Of course, if a permanent camp is to be established for some time, a birch-bark shelter can be made that is both dry and comfortable. Personally I prefer



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to have a tent, leaving the natives to choose their own form of roof covering.

A collapsible lantern, which can be bought cheaply, and which burns candles, is both comfortable and economical ; for a candle lighted in the open gutters out so fast as to be almost worse than useless.

The items most affecting personal comfort are bedding and clothing. I take two of the heaviest blankets I can buy—for years I used nothing but Jaeger's, finding them excellent in every way—and I have two large waterproof ground-sheets, one to put on the ground, the other to cover me, if it is very wet or very cold. These are well worth the extra weight involved, and should be provided with brass eyelets all round them to enable them to be laced up securely with rope.

The clothes should be woollen, one change for a trip of short duration, such as I am describing. Two huckaback towels are a necessity. I have purposely specified “two frying-pans.” On one occasion we lost our one and only pan—a real blow. Two take up but little room, and are of great assistance.

All these hints are for those whose pockets are, like mine, of slender dimensions, where the absolute necessities only must be taken, and where the means of transport are your own and your companions' shoulders. In places where

Newfoundland

horses are available for packing purposes, or where, as in Africa, porters can be obtained, also where money is no object, then you can embroider the above to any extent—even to champagne! I consider, however, that the more primitive I am and the more I do for myself, the greater the enjoyment obtained. I have often packed forty pounds of a load in Alaska, day after day, cordially detesting the job whilst at it, because I could not see my guide and Indians packing along with half as much more on their backs without doing my share. I used to apologize for the lightness of my load as compared to theirs by saying that they were used to it, and I was not.

Having bought the necessary outfit, as seemed good to Pat, I booked two passages by the small coasting steamer *Plover* to La Poile, a small fishing hamlet on the west coast. The voyage took two days, as we had to call at several small stations *en route*.

Arrived at La Poile, I was offered hospitality by the manager of a lobster factory, who put me up during my stay. He also lent me a boat to take my outfit up to the head of the bay—a distance of twelve miles—and recommended me to take a Micmac Indian, by name Johnny Peters; also a white man, to cook for us and look after the camp. These preparations took the whole of the next day, as, after engaging these

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men, the different loads had to be apportioned out and packed.

I went with my host to pull up a lobster pot which had been put down the previous night about fifty yards from the jetty. We found nine lobsters in it, huge fellows, worth four shillings each in England, but "out there" to be bought for three shillings a hundred. The fishermen catch them by "jigging." A jig consists of a bright, leaden, oblong weight, studded with a number of long sharp pins turned upwards, barbless hooks, and the method of using is to let the weight down to the bottom, when it is alternately jerked up and down through a space of some two or three feet. The lobsters rush at the shining lure, get impaled on the pins, and are hauled aboard. This ingenious scheme is also used for catching squid, and is adopted on the banks of Newfoundland as a means of obtaining bait for cod-fishing.

We were all ready for a start on the second morning after my arrival. The day was bright and frosty, typical of early November. It took us about three hours to arrive at the point where we meant to leave the boat, and we hoped to make permanent camp some twenty miles from the landing-place. Each shouldering his pack we set out for the small gulch or ravine known to Johnny Peters, near the Barrens, or high table-lands, where the caribou are to be found. The

Newfoundland

way, by a trail known to the Micmac, who used it in his autumn hunts, was all against collar, through woods and rock-strewn canyons, the hardest of going. We stuck to it steadily for two hours, when I called a halt, suggesting lunch. I was not so ravenously hungry as all that, but I needed a rest badly, being frightfully out of condition, and so inexperienced in packing that though my load was of the slightest description, consisting merely of my rifle and bedding, it seemed to weigh a ton.

Then we started afresh to make the camping-place. I was wearing a pair of shooting-boots, with nails in the soles—they were heavy, besides being wet through in two minutes. Pat had on sealskin mocassins reaching to his knees, which I envied. He had an extra pair that I purchased from him and used throughout the trip, much to my satisfaction and comfort.

A steep dip, and we found ourselves on the banks of a small river with a clearing of some twenty square yards. Packs were thrown off tired backs, axes taken up, and in ten minutes Johnny had cut down as many spruce poles, lopped off the branches, and brought armfuls of the latter to where I was standing. I looked on, for the simple reason that, in those days, I did not know how to help, and should only have been, like the clown in the circus, “in the way.”

Pat was busy with the fire. He cut two short

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thick logs and placed them about a foot apart, then collected a handful of "old man's beard," a lichen growing in abundance on the fir trees, which makes splendid kindling for a fire, even when wet. Then he brought some birch boughs and a log or two of the same wood, and stripping off some of the highly resinous bark soon had a fire started. Whilst it was burning up the cook filled the kettle at the river.

Meantime Johnny had been getting on famously with the lean-to. He had stuck in some poles slanting towards the fire about three feet apart, and interlacing some spruce boughs between them, built out a wing of the same description, where the head of my bed was to be. Fresh armfuls of the tips of spruce boughs, with the cut ends tucked beneath, made me a couch a foot thick, and as night fell I spread my blankets and waterproof sheet on the sweet-scented resting-place. A small log provided the foundation for a pillow of all my spare clothes—a bed for a king!

Then—supper. Bacon, bread and butter, and tea.

More tired than I had ever been, I was as happy as it is possible for mortal man to be in this wicked world.

The fire had burnt low when I turned in between my warm blankets. Towards morning, when the cold was at its greatest, the fire having

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gone right out, I pulled up my mackintosh covering sheet and slept on again—the sleep of the weary, although Pat snored loud enough to waken the dead. I learnt a tip here, which may come in useful to others whose rest is disturbed by the snorer. Whistle once or twice. I have tried this remedy on many occasions, mostly with the desired effect.

Johnny awoke me by touching me on the shoulder and saying “Dawn!”—potent monosyllable to a hunter—and though I could have done with another hour between the blankets I didn’t say so, but took my towel and soap to the river.

Pat produced his second pair of mocassins, and showed me how to put the foot-cloths on. I was advised to put on two pairs of shooting stockings, then a square of stout blanketing, into the centre of which I placed my foot, folding the two sides of cloth over my instep and turning back the overlapping toe part also on to the instep. The foot was then slid into the mocassin, and fastened under the knee with a drawing string. This footwear is absolutely waterproof, but it took me a few days to get used to the feel of it, my feet, from wearing leather shoes, being so tender. They are the best things I have ever worn, with the exception of Lapp knee-boots, which are very similar, the principal difference consisting in the material

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of which they are made and that used to protect the feet from the cold and bruises. With the Laplander this consists of a fine grass, very soft and comfortable, which absorbs the perspiration, and this, like the foot-cloths, must be taken out on your return to camp and dried in front of the fire, when it is ready for use next day.

Johnny Peters, before it was dark the previous evening, had felled two long spruce trees higher up the river, and placed them side by side across the stream for use as a foot-bridge, carefully smoothing limbs and knots off with an axe.

After breakfast, having put a tin of sardines each and some bread into our pockets, Johnny and I essayed to cross the bridge. He got over easily enough, being nimble as a monkey, but I found the journey perilous to a fascinating degree. For a bough or so, which the bridge-builder had forgotten to notice, was still in the water, throwing spray on to the tree trunks to freeze where it fell. The result was a young skating-rink ! I solved the difficulty by straddling the logs and working my way along with my hands.

It was but a short distance to the first barren. We had been walking for perhaps an hour when we came to a small hillock, from the top of which we could see a good deal of the surrounding country. We pulled out our pipes and glasses,

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spying the district thoroughly. I had a first-class pair of binoculars with a very large field, which made excellent stalking-glasses, and which Johnny Peters evidently envied, for although he was given to saying very little, it was plain to me, that if, perchance, I were to lose them and he were lucky enough to find them, he would have valued highly his acquisition.

We had been sitting in this place for some ten minutes when Johnny gave a sort of grunt, whilst he continued to stare at a spot on the very far side of the barren we were on. At last he muttered "Caribou!"—pointing out where he had seen them. Look as I might, and I tried with every nerve in my eyes to pick them up, I could discover nothing. Johnny said they must have moved into a hollow part of the ground, where they would be out of sight. They were too far off to tell whether a stag was with the party of four, so we started off to where they had disappeared. This took us far longer than I had anticipated, and we must have walked a distance of three miles. The going over these barrens is very heavy, consisting as they do of very wet, soft, spongy moss into which you sink almost to your ankles at every step. Where the ground is somewhat higher there up crops the grey, short-growing lichen, on which the caribou feed, lichen very similar in appearance to that which grows on the boles and

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limbs of apple trees in England. We were walking fast too, and although Johnny was a very small, slight man, it was amazing how quickly he covered the ground; so much so, that I had to put my best leg forward to enable me to keep up with him at all.

Suddenly we came to a deep gulch or ravine, heavily timbered with spruce and birch trees. There was plenty of fresh spoor, the tracks crossing each other frequently. We followed a game track down one side of the gulch, crossing a small stream at the bottom, then scrambled up the far side at our best pace. It was my best pace, at any rate, for my heart was going like a sledgehammer, and it was a case of "bellows to mend" before I got to the top. Here we entered upon another barren, but before leaving the shelter afforded by the timber, hastily glanced around lest there should be game afoot. The wind was right, blowing directly into our faces, so we made a bee-line for a hill we had seen when spying from the knoll.

Now our pace slackened, the ground being considerably more broken and irregular. We came at last to a rise, dropping on to our hands and knees, and crawling very carefully so as to look over the top. Johnny, who was in front of me, suddenly bobbed out of sight; then together we peered on all sides carefully, heads level with the ground. In front of us the ground

Newfoundland

sloped gently towards another canyon some six hundred yards away, and there, on the edge of the timber, were the first caribou, or any wild game for the matter of that, that I had ever seen. Unfortunately, there was no stag of killable age in the party, which consisted of three hinds and a pricket stag. After watching them through my glasses for a quarter of an hour, to make certain that no stag was hidden amongst the trees, we carefully slid down out of sight, leaving the party in peace, and quite unaware of our presence.

We now turned away to the left, and, after walking a mile or more, climbed a ridge, or steppe, which opened to our view another large flat or barren. Here, again, we carefully scanned the land lying before us, but, seeing nothing, sat down to eat our lunch. I may here remark that when hunting in a country like this I have found it a fatal mistake to drink anything during the time one is walking—it is a case of the more you drink, the more you want. If you chew a small piece of stick, or suck a small pebble, you will be much fresher, and find that you can do without drinking well enough, if you have the strength of mind to resist the first or second temptation to do so. Reserve your thirst until you have had something to eat in the middle of the day, then drink, but sparingly.

After a short rest and smoke, we bore away

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rather more to the left, making, as it were, a big circling movement back to camp, which, at this point, must have been eight or nine miles off. Johnny was still leading when suddenly he dropped like a stone into the wet moss. "Stag!" he muttered. I fairly shook with excitement, for I had not been smart enough to see the beast as yet. Johnny now ran about one hundred yards sharp to his left, where a long mound ran alongside a small dip in the ground. Here, too, was a gigantic rock, behind which we dropped out of sight, whilst the Indian peered round one corner of it. Then he touched the rifle, and told me by signs to look.

There, surely enough, strolling along across our front, was a caribou stag.

I sat down, resting my elbow on my knee, waiting until he should put in an appearance my side of the rock. I had the rifle to my shoulder, and at last the grand beast walked into view, not more than one hundred yards away. He stopped, looking about him, and I drew a bead on his shoulder. Useless! The rifle wobbled all over the place, and for the life of me I could not keep it still, nor hold my breath. My heart was in my mouth, and all the time the rifle trembled and shook.

The caribou moved on a few paces, and I determined that if I meant to shoot at all I must obtain better control of my nerves. I still

Newfoundland

covered him with the sights, or thought I was doing so, as I pulled the trigger on the beast that was standing broadside on with his head turned from me.

I was using a .500 Winchester Express, and it was the work of an instant to pump another cartridge into the chamber and fire again. Still no move on the part of my target. He faced the other way nonchalantly, listening with interest to the echo of the rifle in the distant canyons.

I was getting desperate now, and could hear the Micmac muttering all sorts of imprecations behind my back, which only made things worse. I fired five more shots at that caribou as he stood as though carved in wood, persevering until he turned off calmly into a belt of timber.

This story is an absolute fact! I would not have credited it had I not been the one to make such a fool of myself. My feelings can be more readily imagined than described—I could have cried with vexation and shame. Johnny took the rifle, looked it over, patted it as though he would demand of it whether the fault lay with it or the user, and I tried to make excuses to myself for myself.

Then Johnny desired to know if I had any more cartridges, an unintentional bit of sarcasm, perhaps, on his part. I had seven left, and the Indian put one in the chamber as we walked along.

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We came upon a small sheet of water, two hundred yards or so in circumference, in the centre of which projected a rock about as big as a man's head. "Shoot!" said the little Indian laconically, entrusting me with my rifle again.

I was steady enough now, I had had my lesson, and felt like a clockwork man. Sitting down, I took careful aim at the stone and pulled. The bullet hit the water directly in a line with the rock, but some six or seven feet beyond, thus proving that, seated as I was, on the level with the object aimed at, the bullet must have been within an ace of hitting the top of the stone.

Johnny then took two shots, one of which fairly hit the mark; then I had a couple more, one of which was similar to the first fired, whilst the second scored a hit, the bullet glancing off—we heard it sing as it flew at a tangent. This left me with two cartridges only, but with the assurance that the rifle was sound enough—the shooter had to take the blame and disgrace of the bad shooting.

I don't know which of us was most down on his luck, the Indian or I, as we made tracks for camp.

The beast I had so shamefully missed had a nice head, looking to my unpractised eye much better than it probably was, and I comforted myself with this sophistry, even though I did not believe it, saying in effect, "If he be not

Newfoundland

game for me, what care I how fair he be ! ” But I knew better ! Like many another man before me, and like many more to come, I had experienced a dose of “ buck-fever,” an unenviable state of the nerves, needing a good shock ere the lesson is learnt.

It was all the more unfortunate, too, as we had no fresh meat in camp—nothing but bacon.

CHAPTER II

Newfoundland—*continued*

To sport—Hosannah !
Hunt, fish, shoot,
Would a man fulfil life's duty !
Not to the bodily frame alone
Does sport give strength and beauty,
But character gains.

THE gods are sometimes kind to the unfortunate, and they favoured me as I went back to camp that late afternoon. Within two miles of home I myself spotted a beast in the distance, which, for a wonder, Johnny had not seen. I fancy he was so disgusted with his former experience of me that he had relaxed his vigilance. Anyhow, I saw the caribou first, and was hugely elated in consequence.

I had but the two cartridges, one in the chamber, the other in the magazine, and Johnny's eyes began to sparkle again with excitement as he held the rifle and set about crawling towards a hillock which would put us within eighty yards of our game. The excitement was intense ! I wriggled my way in imitation of the Indian's undulating passage over the mossy ground, and

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presently he handed me the weapon, and I peered over a ridge, feeling that I could hit an apple at the distance. I aimed for the centre of the shoulder-blade, fired, and heard the distinct thud of the bullet as it hit.

“Good! Good!” screamed the Micmac, as my beast rolled over, with its feet in the air.

The head was of no account, even I could see that, but we had now an abundance of fresh meat, within easy distance of camp too. We took a haunch each, the kidneys, and two slices of the best meat on any animal, namely, that which is to be found on the inside and placed along, and on each side of, the backbone. Johnny also annexed the skins of the two hocks, which he afterwards made into green mocassins, hair side out, sewing them with sinews taken from the back and neck of the beast I had just killed.

It was dark when we got back to the river, and Pat came across the logs to give me a hand over. They had heard the last shot fired, so knew we were not far off, and had prepared tea and frying-pan bread, to which we added some fresh caribou steak.

Pat was very sympathetic whilst I yarned after supper, and tried to make my shocking shooting better than it was, and comforted me with a cheery “Never mind! Better luck to-morrow. I will come out with you.”

Next morning Pat and I were up and break-



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fasting just as it was getting light, thus making a very early start, the more necessary as the days now were all too short, and we contemplated going far beyond where Johnny and I had seen the hinds on the previous day—farther to the eastward.

My feet were most tender, owing to being unaccustomed to wearing mocassins, but I had bathed them in a strong solution of salt and water, which I trusted would harden them. To make things worse, I hit the toes of my right foot against the stub of a tree, which hurt much, and for a time made me go slowly.

We saw lots of willow grouse. They do not mind human beings in the very least, and sit on the low scrub until you approach them closely, when they may rise and fly off thirty or forty yards. I killed three by shooting their heads off with a bullet each, as I had no shot-gun with me. They made most excellent stew, and we had them roasted over the fire to take out with us for lunch on the barrens.

We went over practically the same trail as on the previous day, but had no luck at all, until we had passed the spot where the hinds and pricket had been seen. Then we entered and crossed a deep gulch, ascending the farther side, and had not gone more than half a mile when Pat saw a stag standing on the side of a hill, about five hundred yards off. He was feed-

Newfoundland

ing quite leisurely, and seemed to be in an excellent place for a stalk.

The hill on which he stood faced another gulch, running at right angles to the one we had recently crossed, and the wind was blowing directly from the beast to us ; but as he was some way to our right, we trusted to being able to work round and approach him from the brow of the hill. When we arrived at the top of the rise we could not see the caribou anywhere. Pat said he must have lain down, as is the habit of these animals, between ten and twelve of a morning, after feeding. We knew that we were within two hundred yards of the place where we had last seen him, but were afraid to commence the descent of the hill lest we should startle our quarry without getting the chance of a shot. So we waited, searching every yard of the ground below us with the glasses.

Suddenly Pat caught my arm—we were lying flat on our faces hidden behind some dwarf tuck bush—and pointed and whispered to me to look about forty yards to our left, where he had seen the tip of a moving horn. I could see no horns, nor anything approaching a horn. Pat whispered again that he would whistle gently once whilst I threw a cartridge into the chamber of my rifle and prepared to fire the instant the caribou should rise to his feet.

A short, sharp whistle broke the silence—but

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nothing happened. Again the whistle, after a second's interval, which aroused him this time, and within forty yards of us a grand bull slowly arose, stretching himself, standing broadside on to me. Now was my opportunity! Covering the centre of his shoulder-blade with the sights, I pressed the trigger, and the soft-nosed bullet hit him exactly where I had intended. He crumpled up as though he had been shot through the brain.

This was much better. We found him stone dead—a nice symmetrical pair of horns, but small.

“You'll get better than this,” said Pat prophetically, his words, as the words of all prophets should, luckily coming true.

We cut off the head, leaving plenty of skin on the neck, galloping the beast, and taking the kidneys with us. We stuck a piece of paper in a cleft stick, to enable us to describe the spot to our Indian, whom I meant to send out here to bring the meat into camp.

It was now twelve o'clock, and the fresh air and an early breakfast had made us ravenous. We had lunch, therefore—cold caribou meat and bread washed down with a drink of water from the gulch below us.

After smoking the pipe of peace we started off on our way back to camp, Pat carrying the head of my beast on his back, the horns resting one

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over each shoulder. Such loads are awkward things to pack through timbered country, as the bushes have an annoying trick of hitching one up at every available opportunity. Luckily, the country hereabouts was mostly of the barren order, the ravines which divide up the barrens at infrequent intervals being the only wooded portions.

I was much struck by seeing one broad strip of timber in which every tree was dead. Stark and bare the great limbs stood out against the wonderful blue of the sky. This desolate line extended from the creek in the bottom, transversely, to the outer edge of the canyon; the widest part was perhaps a hundred yards, with a length of about six hundred. Pat said that the damage had been caused by lightning. What a storm it must have been! Sweeping all before it, and blasting every living stick standing within the zone of the stroke!

We had covered half the distance back to camp when I caught sight of a splendid caribou, at about four hundred yards distance, just disappearing behind a rise of ground, and coming towards us.

We at once dropped, hiding amongst a small clump of bushes. It seemed to me like an hour, it was about five minutes really, before a magnificent old stag came into full view, walking very slowly and lamely, stopping now and again to

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crop a mouthful of lichen. I would not shoot, as he was directly facing me, so waited, patiently as I could, until he should turn broadside on.

When about eighty yards off he gave me my chance, and I seized the opportunity, planting a bullet behind the shoulder—the thud of the hit was distinctly to be heard. The noticeable lameness disappeared as by magic.

“You hit him all right,” shouted Pat, as we hurried to where the stag had vanished behind another knoll, up which we raced, to see him again standing facing us now, at about 160 yards distance.

I fired again, and the big beast dropped his head with a spasmodic jerk. I was pumped with the run up the slope, and, in any case, it was a most difficult shot. Off went the caribou once more, going strong, showing no sign of being mortally wounded.

A narrow strip of water faced him, a little lake some six feet wide by two hundred long, and he tried gallantly to negotiate the difficulty. It proved too much for his failing strength. He pecked badly on the far side, and suddenly rolled over stone dead.

This head proved to be the best I obtained on the trip, and was quite an excellent one for the country. It was that of an old beast, with horns past their prime, in fact, they had been going



CARIBOU
Cangifer arcticus

Newfoundland

back for a year or so, the tips being rounded and pointless.

On opening the prize we found that his heart had been cut right open by the heavy .500 bullet. He was full of blood inside, and it was a marvel that he had not dropped at once to my first shot, instead of going, as he did, four hundred yards before he succumbed.

I was so delighted with my success that I felt I could walk another twenty miles if necessary, now that I had bagged two heads in one day.

After cutting off his head, we had to hurry on, the light was failing. Pat took the big trophy, I the smaller, with my rifle.

The old saying, "It never rains but it pours," proved the rule on this eventful day. For we had not gone two miles before we saw another stag, a small one, some four hundred yards away on our right. We did not need meat, so I had no designs on his life—to destroy him would have been wanton cruelty. Pat, however, could not resist the temptation of waving the horns of the stag he was carrying above the bush where we were hidden, and this device proved so alluring that the live animal walked to within fifteen yards of our place of concealment. He took a hurried departure when we both jumped up and shouted at him.

Caribou get over the ground marvellously

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quickly when frightened. They do not seem to gallop, but trot with a long swinging gait.

I remained in camp all next day, helping to skin out the two heads I had killed, and to smoke a certain portion of the flesh and tongues, which latter are most excellent eating. I brought them back to England, where they were much appreciated.

My luck now seemed to have deserted me, and for days we did not come across a hoof of any description. I killed several more willow grouse for the pot, and Johnny made repeated journeys to the dead caribou in order to bring in the meat.

The weather, which up to then had been delightful, broke, and it rained incessantly. The wind blew a hurricane, and I was glad of my ground-sheets — otherwise my blankets and clothes would have been soaked. The lean-to was admirable in fine or frosty weather, but the rain trickled through it on to my bed in little rivulets.

There was no fun going out shooting under these conditions, and we whiled away the time in yarning, smoking, and eating. Johnny had brought in the greater part of the meat, and the trees in the vicinity of camp looked like a butcher's shop.

Next we had sharp frosts at night, diversified by heavy falls of snow. It was better than rain, and spooring was greatly simplified. The veriest

Newfoundland

tyro could tell by the fresh traces what game the country held. I started out again, not because I required any more heads, for I had a good one and a medium one. I just wanted to see what I should see.

I am, and always have been, averse to shooting beasts for the mere sake of killing, and having slain I might say scores of animals, I would, if I could, give them back their lives. Shooting with a camera was not thought of in those far-off days of which I write, but I can understand how fascinating a pursuit it must be. You get all the exercise, sport, and excitement derived from a difficult stalk without the inevitable regret one must always experience as one sees the quarry lying dead.

On this, the last day, I went to the barrens. We saw a few hinds, and plenty of fresh spoor on the snow, but no stag.

I had decided to get back now as soon as possible to the coast, as the fortnightly steamer would be due in a day or two, and I wanted to dry out the skins and scalps of the two beasts I had kept, which was not easy in a wet camp.

Accordingly, we struck camp, and returned to La Poile, where I had to remain a day or so, and once again I accepted the hospitality of the manager of the lobster cannery, who gave me, at supper, an introduction to spruce beer. I did not like it at first, but after a fair trial I took

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to it so kindly that I begged for a few bottles to help down the very poor fare of the steamer.

Johnny Peters, for an Indian, was quite sorry to part with me, and I gave him, in addition to his pay, which he had thoroughly earned, a lot of camp gear. He still cast loving eyes on my glasses, but those I did not feel inclined to part with.

On the way back to St. John's we stopped to pick up two passengers who were going to Canada. They were engaged, and were to be married on arrival. A too-persuasive friend of the husband-elect had supplied a sort of stirrup cup in the form of a tumblerful of raw rum, 40 over proof—an amount to make even an Indian toper drunk. The result was melancholy to a degree. For he had not been on board an hour before he behaved like a raving lunatic, and eventually became so violent that the captain had to send three men aft to strap the "tee-totaller" to the grating of the wheel-house. The poor girl sat up with her prospective bridegroom throughout the night, holding his hands.

At St. John's I remained a day or so awaiting the Allan liner that was to take me on to Halifax, N.S., and found much to interest in the stores wherein were stacked the tons of dry cod for which St. John's is famous. A great portion of this fish goes to Portugal, and other Roman Catholic countries, the ships bringing back as

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part cargo pipes of port wine, for which St. John's is also celebrated. The climate of the place is said to have a great effect on the satisfactory maturing of the wine. The cod are found on the famous banks that lie some miles from the land, and are caught with long lines, called "trots," which have hundreds of hooks on them baited with squid. The fish are cleaned, split open, and salted, at the place of their catching, and are then brought ashore to be laid out on grilles of wood to dry in the sun and air. The livers are saved, and thrown into large tubs where they remain until they are more or less decomposed. The oil in them then rises to the surface, when it is skimmed off with shallow ladles. The best quality of this oil, as every one knows, is used as a medicine in debility and pulmonary diseases, whilst the lower grades are employed principally by tanners.

CHAPTER III

West Coast of Africa—Cape Coast Castle—Krooboyes—New Benin—Nana Alluma—Old Calabar—Collecting butterflies—Driver ants.

The Red Gods call me out and I must go!—RUDYARD KIPLING.

IN 1894, the spirit of unrest being still upon me, I accepted the post of Private Secretary to Sir Claude Macdonald, and accompanied him in that capacity to Calabar, the capital of what was in those days "The Oil Rivers Protectorate," West Coast of Africa.

At Cape Coast Castle we went ashore, my chief having to pay a visit to the Governor. Here all the cargo for that port had to be transported in surf boats, the bows and sterns of which are both pointed, somewhat like those of a whale boat, but infinitely larger and broader, and managed by the native crews with remarkable dexterity. The water is comparatively shallow, but at times large "rollers," as they are called, come in, and make communication with the land practically impossible.

On the occasion of our landing we had quite an exciting experience, as the seas were coming in in unbroken swells, which had not the char-

Cape Coast Castle

acter of being bad “rollers.” We all took our seats, relying on the skill of our crew, who sat on the gunwale, six on each side of the boat, brandishing paddles, the heads of which are heart-shaped. A voluble steersman directed when to paddle and when to stop.

We, in the boat, could plainly see that the breakers near the shore were big enough, but from the place where our ship lay anchored, about a mile from land, they resembled but a slightly moving swell.

We started—the boys keeping time with their paddles to perfection. As we proceeded the boat appeared to stand more or less on end. Now we were deep down in the trough of a big hollow, next we were being hurled along on the hissing crest of a huge green wave; and there before us were the mighty rollers, breaking into foam upon the beach. A shout from the steersman, who had hastily glanced behind him, and the boat stopped dead, then seemed to slide back, as though by machinery, into the trough of a wave just passed, from whose depths we were lifted to the top of a mightier sea than ever, as though we were a bottle cork. This happened four or five times, the boat being, during all this time, head on to the sea. At length, at a given shout from the Krooboy in command, the crew, with hoarse yells and cries, dug out with their paddles as though possessed, and we travelled on the

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crest of the incoming wave at racing speed, surrounded by the flying foam, of which not a drop came aboard until the bow of the little craft grated on the sand in a smothering sheet of sea spume, to be seized by dozens of ready native men, who dragged her out of danger.

These surf boats have been known to turn turtle during the performance, and as the seas in the neighbourhood are infested with sharks, the prospect in case of disaster is not a pleasant one.

In the various ports at which the steamer called it was always most interesting to me to watch the hordes of natives paddling out in their canoes to offer parrots, bananas, and other produce. Perhaps one of the men had once been in the service of a white man, and desired to obtain another such billet, and this sort of thing ensued :

“ You savvy me, I be Tom. I be Mr. Robinson’s boy. I have um book.” And a certificate of character is held up, a chit provided by a former master, or carefully manufactured at home.

A boy is prepared to accompany a new boss to the latter’s destination at a moment’s notice, and every white man has one at least of these Krocboys as a body-servant. They are excellent workers, faithful, too, in most respects, and many of them can speak broken or pidgin-English.

Nana Alluma

You give them access to all you possess, hand over your keys and your money, and distrust only steps in when you are dealing with a boy who has graduated in a missionary school. So much so that if such a one is really anxious to obtain a job he always answers the missionary school question in the negative, whether it is true or not.

Everything was strange to me, and I felt the climate enervating to a degree. In those days the houses and food were very inferior to what can be had at present. Not that I had anything to worry me, seeing that I had the best we could get, and the same as my chief. He was consideration itself, and my one complaint was that he gave me practically nothing to do.

On our arrival at the Protectorate we were met at Forcados River by H.M.S. *Widgeon*, and going on board, set out for New Benin, which was but a day's steaming through the creeks—creeks framed by the mangrove bushes, and in many cases deep enough to enable a large ship to safely navigate them.

A war palaver had recently taken place, in which Nana Alluma, the King of New Benin, was the delinquent, and Sir Claude had come out to his duties earlier than he otherwise would have done owing to this small disturbance in order to try Nana and his chiefs, who had all been taken prisoners.



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Nana had to bear the brunt of the whole affair; but the trial was very uninteresting to me, for the simple reason that being new to the country I took in but little of the evidence, which had to be carried on haltingly through interpreters. Nana was convicted, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. He was sent to Old Calabar, where he passed the earlier period of his detention, being afterwards transferred to Cape Coast Castle, either of these places being hundreds of miles away from his home.

He was quite a big chief, wealthy too, with many wives, only one of whom stuck to him through his trouble, volunteering to accompany him into exile. A truculent lady this, who gave me a large slice of her mind when I went to see her husband in order to offer to obtain for him any little privileges that lay in my power.

Before leaving I went to look at the havoc caused by shell fire in New Benin. There were many large holes in the ground where the 4·7 shells from the warships had burst; but very little loss of life was entailed, as the natives took to the thick bush out of harm's way, and the huts were so much scattered that they were not often hit. Even had they been destroyed it would not have taken much time to build them up again—they were of mud and wattle merely. The children had a bad time of it—two little beggars who had been almost starved to death

Old Calabar

were brought in to the Consulate. They were so frightfully emaciated that one's heart bled for them. The doctor attached to the station put one of them into his own bed, nursing his charge as though it were his own. Bless his kind Irish heart !

In these small rows, as indeed in most rows in this world, the women and children are the worst sufferers, and the old adage holds good—"the weak go to the wall."

When the troops had defeated Nana, and taken possession of the town, they destroyed hundreds of cases of trade gin, smashing the cases and bottles. This spirit was not all for home consumption, but was an article of commerce in the business carried on by the chief with the tribes of the interior.

Most of the minor chiefs hereabouts wore large lumps of dark-coloured coral suspended on a string round their thick necks. They would pay fancy prices for unusual pieces. In the good old days when palm-oil fetched big money the natives made comparatively big fortunes, but now that the demand has decreased in consequence of cheaper forms of oil being used, the "palmy" days in that direction are over.

After Nana's trial we resumed our voyage to Old Calabar, which was the seat of government and the residence of the Consul-General. We took Nana and his small entourage along, he

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being accommodated on the quarter-deck, screened off from the rest of the ship.

On the voyage up the coast I had my first experience of a tornado. These storms occur suddenly, passing as quickly, and for the few minutes they last the wind whips the sea into foam, the rain pours down in torrents, the thunder rolls, and brilliant flashes of lightning cut the darkness. Then the sun shines forth once more, making one doubt the just-passed tribulation. Tornadoes have one thing at least in their favour—they cool the air for a short spell.

I was quite impressed with the importance of Old Calabar, which is situated some thirty miles up the river of the name, on one side of which is a massive cliff, and on the top of this a plateau of some two hundred cleared acres. Here the Consulate houses, the Court-house, and the Barracks had been placed in order to be free from the vaporous fever-laden air that rises at night from the marshes of the river. This plateau falls in a sharp decline on either side to the river, at whose edge are the various factories and stores which trade with the natives, a trade of bartering in gold, which is brought to the stores in bird quills, ebony, palm-oil, and mahogany, for hardware, cotton goods, beads, wire, and general merchandise.

On the down side of the river was the native

Collecting Butterflies

town, prettily situated on a rising bit of land. Native Calabar is very famous for its wrestlers, and here at all hours of the day a group of athletes might be seen striving with one another. They will wager on themselves or their fancies all their worldly possessions in their passion for gambling over these contests.

Calabar was the head-quarters of the "Egbo," a mysterious secret society, a new member of which had to pay a heavy fine or premium by way of entrance fee. Before Sir Claude MacDonald took the matter in hand, the cult was responsible for various forms of barbarities and atrocities, which he was instrumental in modifying and suppressing. The "Egbo" has its uses, in that it is a means of conveying laws and instructions to the surrounding district, and prevents, in a great measure, the undue usurpation of power in one king's hands.

A bell is rung when the secret society is in congress, and formerly, as the procession of "Egbo" men passed through the town, every one not of the persuasion ran into their houses, or death might have been their portion. Only one white man has been admitted into the sacred circle. He was a well-known trader of the place, much respected by the natives.

I employed, during the time I was in Calabar, two native boys to catch butterflies, beetles, moths, etc., for me, supplying them with killing-

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bottles, nets, boxes, and the rest, and I shall never forget the first batch of specimens they brought me—a collection of broken wings, absolutely useless!

I had no appliances for setting insects, so simply folded them gently together in a V-shaped envelope in order to protect their plumage, and soon had quite a nice lot of gorgeous butterflies and moths. The small red ants that swarm over and devour everything were my chief enemies, and I had to keep all my treasures in hermetically sealed cases in order to save them. These ants, on discovering anything edible, seemed to convey the news to each other, and in next to no time a constant stream of them passed to and fro from their nest to the object and back again.

One might fondly imagine oneself the proud possessor of some rare bird skin or moth, only to find, when next it was looked at, a little heap of feathers, or some particles of dust.

I soon had a box crammed full of fine specimens, and sent them off to Mr. J. E. Harting, in England, who had promised to have them set up and given to the Natural History Museum. Unfortunately, the first consignment never arrived. I sent them via Fernando Po, Cameroons, by a German steamer, and though the parcel may have reached Europe, I heard no more of it. I had better luck next time, when a

Driver Ants

fine collection was handed over to the museum, many insects among the lot being new to London. On my return some months later I went to the Natural History Museum, hoping to see the results of my gift, and was met with so much red tape that I thereupon made a vow never again to go out of my way to collect anything for it. The officials seemed to think I was presuming when I asked to be shown the specimens I had taken so much trouble to procure, and all I could get out of them was that my offering "had been incorporated in the collection."

Among other things I sent home were the shells of some edible snails, which were coloured dark brown, banded with yellow, some of them measuring four inches by two. I had noticed a heap of them in the native town amongst the huts, and asked one of the niggers, who spoke English, what they were for. "Heap good chop," he answered, which, being interpreted, means, "Plenty good food," so I told him to bring me a supply to the Consulate. "Them big house that live for hill."

I put some of the snails into a large glass jar filled with water, and placed a piece of glass over the top. When snails are treated in this fashion they exhaust all the air in the jar and come out of their residences to avoid suffocation. In a couple of hours the animals had entirely left

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their shells, enabling me to cut off the protruding flesh, and the little plate of shell used for closing up the entrance to the snail retreat.

When I had cleaned out some of them I sent them off to a friend of mine, Mr. Layard, of Budleigh Salterton, a great conchologist, and he told me that the specimens were new to science, and christened them after me.

The commissariat "on the hill" at Calabar was restricted in variety, consisting mainly of tinned foods, and I thought it would be a good idea to import a pig or two, and some fowls and turkeys, all of which I ordered through our agent in London. The pigs were installed in a magnificent brick sty, to which we had no end of difficulty in introducing them. Owing to the unaccustomed heat the animals would lie down, refusing to budge. Two or three days after the turkeys came, the boy who was detailed to look after them came to me in great distress, saying over and over again, "Hen live for die." I found one of the birds sitting on a perch with drooping head, black with driver ants, who were stinging their prey to death. "Live for die" hardly expressed the situation. With a stick I put the poor turkey out of misery, and the ants scattered far and wide. I told the boy to bury the corpse, but I expect he cooked it for his supper, and invited all his pals to the banquet.

A week later my chief and I went up-river to

Driver Ants

a small village to try a man for murder, and we walked a mile or so through thick bush to the house of a missionary, passing on our way two great streams of driver ants, going and coming to and from a store of food they had discovered. My chief stepped over this foot-wide mass of vindictiveness, and I followed gingerly. Coming home, however, we did not get off quite so simply. It was not dark, but the short tropical afternoon was closing in, and the half-lights played pranks with us. Suddenly Sir Claude put his foot right into the middle of a stream of driver ants, who set off at once on a tour of inspection up his boots. With a howl of dismay the victim started for the creek, calling wildly to the launch for the dinghy. Dignity was hurled to the winds, and we were rowed out in record time, and in record time too the chief jumped out of his consular uniform.

CHAPTER IV

West Coast of Africa (*continued*)—Crocodiles—Manatee—Mayflies—Natives—Ju-ju—Hausa troops—Trip after Elephants.

So man, striving boldly but blindly,
Ground piecemeal in Destiny's mill,
At his best taking punishment kindly,
Is only a chopping-block still.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

THE Calabar River swarms with crocodiles, some of them huge brutes, who account for a large number of natives in the course of a year. The water is always more or less discoloured, and very deep at a short distance from shore. Crocodiles that prey on human beings and on land animals have a habit of lying in wait to seize their prey at drinking-places and where the natives are in the habit of washing clothes.

The sufferings of a victim after the first wild fright must be soon over, for they are drowned in the course of a minute or two.

I have always loathed these brutes, and when crossing rivers invariably had a dread of being seized by one of them. It is not a comfortable feeling when fording a stream, say, two hundred yards wide, the water being nearly up to one's

Crocodiles

armpits, to reflect that at any moment one of the party may join "the great majority" in such a gruesome manner.

I went down the Calabar River one day with the superintendent of marines, Captain Child, in an Accra canoe cut from a solid log, a very narrow craft, and long. Our crew consisted of eight small boys, with a still younger steersman. They knelt on the floor boards when paddling, and made the canoe fairly fly. Child and I were seated on cushions in the stern, our rifles beside us, for we were out to look for crocodiles that come to bask in the sun on the sand-banks. Child had located, when coming up-river in a launch one day, a huge brute on a sand-bank some five miles from Calabar, and it was this particular beast we were anxious to get.

Arriving in the neighbourhood of the place, the boys paddled as softly as possible. There our quarry was, an old and very wary specimen of his tribe, and he slid off the bank before we were anything like near enough for a shot.

Landing on the sand-spit to look at the trail made by this monster, we found the huge imprints of his fore and hind feet, and the deep furrow formed in the sand where he had ploughed his way to the water. From the marks left he must have measured quite eighteen feet long.

We decided to lie in wait under cover of some mangrove bushes that grew on an island within

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one hundred yards of the sand-spit, and remained an hour or more, when we spotted our enemy's ugly nose close to where he had disappeared. I had a .303 single rifle loaded with a soft-nosed bullet. It is at all times difficult to fire accurately from a canoe—the boat wobbles so disconcertingly, and one's position is so cramped that a miss is scarcely to be wondered at.

I fired at the small portion of the head showing above the water, and the bullet struck the water slightly beyond my mark. This was aggravating, as the tide was rising and the sand-bank would soon be covered.

We had brought with us a large shark-hook attached to a length of chain, to which was tied some ten fathoms of new Manilla rope, whilst to the end of the rope we fastened a heavy anchor. We baited the hook with a piece of salt pork weighing six or seven pounds, stuck the shank of the hook into the sand, and covered up the chain and part of the rope in a like manner. The anchor we buried deep on the top of the bank, and here we left it, intending to return on the morrow to see if our plan had been successful.

Next evening we visited the spot, but nowhere could we find any sign of the tackle. Personally, I think the crocodile was large enough to have dragged the anchor free in his struggles to escape, but Child was of the opinion that a native had annexed the whole concern. The

Manatee

tide would have covered the bank in less than an hour after our departure, so that unless some nigger was waiting and watching, which was not likely, the inference is that this crocodile departed with the hook in his interior. We made a great mistake in not attaching a buoy and light line to the anchor's stock, for this would have given us a chance of at least finding our tackle if he had cleared with it, as he would certainly have been secured in a very short distance, round some rock or root, and its power to hold him was beyond question.

I have shot a good many crocodiles at different times in Africa. They generally crawl up a steep bank above the river, where they remain for hours, sleeping or dozing in the sun. They are, if much disturbed, extremely hard to approach, and when come on suddenly throw themselves backwards into the water with a splash. They are easily killed if shot through the brain, and if they fall, or are killed in the river, sink at once, to rise to the surface again so soon as the gases formed within them after death are strong enough for the purpose. I once undertook to skin a small one—a loathsome job—and I could not rid my hands of the musky scent for hours afterwards.

In the higher reaches of the Calabar River a weird beast has its habitat—the manatee. The natives value them highly as food, catching

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them in traps made of stakes driven into the ground, built out from the banks in the form of a corral. The bait used is freshly gathered leaves and grasses, as the manatee is entirely a vegetable feeder. I tried to obtain some of the flesh, of which I heard so much, but unsuccessfully.

The Calabar River is hardly the place in which one would expect to find a rise of mayfly. Such, however, was my experience. I had been dining on the deck of the largest of our launches, and was sitting smoking, when I heard fish rising in every direction round the boat. Heaps of flies, attracted probably by the lights on board, fluttered inboard, and I examined several. They were very like the green drake we know so well on the Test, and other chalk streams in England, but somewhat smaller in size and of a pale straw colour. We could not muster a hook and line, so I never knew what fish were taking these flies so greedily. I made an effort to catch something with a large bent pin and string, but ineffectually. I would have given a good deal to have had my trout rod and tackle with some artificial spent gnats—the experience would have been unique.

Sir Claude and I were continually making trips in the Protectorate yacht *Evangeline* and visiting the various ports. I therefore had the opportunity of visiting places that otherwise would have been denied me. We generally slept

Natives

ashore at one or other of the various Consulate houses we visited, dining in the mess. We were met by the local chiefs, who came to have various grievances redressed or looked into. Some of these men are worth describing. When they shake hands with you, they seize your hand and snap fingers, as it were, which is a curious custom. They use the thumb and second finger of the right hand, holding your second finger between them. They then snap their fingers together, the stranger's or friend's finger between their fingers. This is not an easy manoeuvre to describe, but is a trait that distinctly surprises the new-comer to the country.

One of the head-men at Degama was piebald. He had some sort of skin disease, which made him an extraordinary sight—a black-and-white patchwork sort of man. Another boy was an Albino nigger, the only one I have ever seen. His skin was a pale yellow, his eyes, when you could see them, for they were generally screwed up tight—I suppose because the light hurt them—were of a pinkish hue, whilst the wool on his head was a sort of dirty yellow colour. I heard there was another Albino native in the Protectorate—a girl—but I did not have the opportunity of seeing her. The boy was an unusual enough sight, so what must the female have been!

I saw one man at Sapele whose costume

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amused me. He had on a shirt and nothing else, an ordinary "boiled" shirt as worn in England, save that it was printed all over the front and back with large black spots as big as a shilling.

On the Forcados River the stranger sees several tiny grass huts, perhaps two feet square, built out from the banks, the front parts of the quaint structures being supported on two stakes driven into the bed of the river, and adorned by odd pieces of calico, white or coloured. Within is a small wooden god, or Ju-ju. Again, you may be walking up a native path, and come to another intercepting the first. At this junction an old egg, a bit of broken crockery, or some fragments of calico are sure to be lying—propitiatory gifts for the same deity.

The troops employed in the Protectorate in my time were recruited from the Hausa tribes—extremely keen soldiers, who very soon pick up their business. They fight well too, and will follow their white officers with the greatest pluck.

On one occasion I accompanied a Captain Searle, who commanded a company of Hausas, to barracks, to unpack a seven-pounder muzzle-loading gun which had just arrived from home. The men who were to form the gun's crew were wildly enthusiastic, and when the piece had been undone, and leisurely put together, Searle explained its mechanism to them. Before he had finished with them that afternoon the men had

Hausa Troops

become so proficient that they dismounted and reassembled the gun in one minute thirty-seven seconds, as timed by my watch.

I was at Calabar, too, when the first regimental band was formed. A bandmaster had been obtained from one of the West Indian regiments, who at first taught his men to play by ear. All niggers have an extraordinary ear for time and sound, and in less than three months the enthusiastic musicians could play a bugle march quite respectably. It was not long before a full band of brass instruments, drums, etc., came to serenade Sir Claude Macdonald, and if the result was a little harsh at times, it was very creditable, seeing that the players had known nothing of music previously, and were now attempting Gilbert and Sullivan's operas with all the nonchalance in the world. I have heard German bands in London whose efforts would have been put to shame by the black men.

One of the sub-chiefs in the district of Calabar came into the Consulate Court one day to decide some petty quarrel, and I happened to meet him. He rejoiced in the poetical name of "Jock of Acarnametian," and came from a wild village on a small river called the Akpiafi—a district famous for elephants. So I adroitly offered Jock a drink by way of a beginning, and before long he told me in his pidgin-English that plenty of elephants were about his place.

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Obtaining leave shortly afterwards I borrowed a launch, and accompanied by Gallwey, a friend and colleague, I started off to pay Jock a visit. His village was but some thirty miles across country, but by the creeks the distance was nearer fifty. We arrived the same afternoon and, having anchored close to shore, set off to interview "Jock o' Hazeldean," as Gallwey christened the chief.

The village was but a hundred yards from the shore, and only one inhabitant could be seen—an old man, crooning to himself in the sun.

"Where Jock be?" I asked, and with a start the ancient one answered me by setting off to a two-storied wooden house, verandahed in the upper part.

"Hallo, Jock! I be come to catch elephant."

"You be fit to catch 'em?"

"I be fit."

"Where them gun be?"

"He live for boat."

"I look 'em?"

"You come for boat; I be fit to show 'em."

We invited the chief to "chop" with us that evening, and have some whisky, and he said he would bring palm-oil chop as his contribution, and invited us to sleep in his house. Punctual to time the guest appeared, a boy carrying a china soup-tureen full of the very rich food.

Jock had arranged for a hunter and guide to

Trip after Elephants

accompany us at daybreak the following morning, and the man duly appeared, armed with a long Dane gun, a trade weapon, smooth in the bore, which could fire a few slugs, and would have been worse than useless in an attack on an elephant. The native was old too, and did not give us the impression of over-keenness, but we had to make the best of what material we had.

Our way took us through the densest jungle, which the sun's rays could not penetrate. Great paths ran hither and thither, paths made by elephants, whose spoor was fresh and abundant.

I carried a double 8-bore Paradox, by Holland and Holland, loaded with ten drams of black powder and a three-ounce hardened bullet in each barrel, whilst Gallwey had a .577 Express by the same makers.

Suddenly Gallwey fell ill with a bad dose of fever—he was violently sick, and although he gamely stuck to it, he was at last compelled to give up. We had to make a long detour to the nearest village in order to get a canoe to take him back to Calabar, for he was quite incapable of walking the distance back to Jock's, where we had left the launch. I wished to accompany him, but he would not hear of it.

This delay, more or less, spoilt my chances for the day, but later we came on a patch of banana plantation, which had only the previous night been devastated by the elephants. The herd

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had completely destroyed everything by pulling up the trees and eating the tops.

Soon afterwards we passed a pool under a rock, all the water in which was stirred up with mud, whilst the surrounding banks were trampled into holes, to which the water was still trickling.

The old guide now showed unmistakable signs of funk. He made as much noise as he could, and ended by pointing his musket at some imaginary object in the tree-tops, preparatory to bringing it down. This was too much, and I knocked his weapon aside, telling him to follow me.

The elephants, of course, had only just vacated this bathing-place, and had my guide, who evidently knew the spot well, been really keen on getting me some sport, he would have approached from above, in which case I should undoubtedly have obtained a shot. His terror was so pronounced, however, that to go forward with him as a guide was worse than useless. I therefore placed him behind, and told him by signs that if he cleared, or made a sound, I would hammer him within an inch of his life.

Soon I found myself in a swampy bit of ground, facing a big bulk about forty yards off, a dim grey-black object, half-hidden in the bush and timber. I knew it was an elephant, although I could not see his head and shoulders—nothing but an indistinct mass which it would have been

Trip after Elephants

idiotic, under all the conditions, to have fired at. My guide thought this too close to be pleasant, and contrived to crack every branch in his vicinity, with the result that the swamp resounded with a still greater smashing of all things standing, and a squelching of mud and water as the big herd passed from the zone of danger.

I was furious, and longed to give the old rascal a hiding, but refrained, knowing that he had me in his power, for had he by some means left me in that wilderness of forest, I could never have found my way out again. I had, therefore, to give the order for the return to Jock's house, which I did by signs, as the "guide" could not speak a word of English, broken or otherwise. Jock was full of apologies for the make-believe hunter with whom I had been encumbered, and promised me a better on the morrow—a promise never fulfilled, for by evening a severe dose of fever overtook me also, and necessitated instant return in the launch to Calabar, where I was laid up for a week.

CHAPTER V

West Coast of Africa—Nimbi War palaver—Sacrifice Island—
The fight—The Island of Ascension—Rollers—Turtle-turn-
ing—Wide-awake Fair—St. Helena—Longwood—Dinizulu
—A huge Tortoise.

“Where man tarries man must slay.”

ONE day news came to Calabar that the natives of Nimbi and the surrounding villages had risen and attacked Akassa, the head station of the Niger Company, which is situated on the sea at one of the mouths of the Niger River. There had been friction for some time past, owing to differences between the Company and native chiefs.

Sir Claude had summoned the paramount chief to come and state his grievances, and ere long this worthy arrived in a big war canoe, sixty feet or so long, a big gun in the bows, and some forty paddlers on each side. Small pennant flags ornamented the vessel, which made a brave show as it arrived at Brass for the palaver. The gist of the chief's remarks was that he had no palaver with the great white Queen, but for the Niger Company he had a wholesome contempt.

The ultimate result of the discontent was an

Nimbi War Palaver

attack on Akassa by the natives of Nimbi, who looted the place, killed several of the Krooboys employed there, and took some thirty prisoners.

Here was the making of one of the little wars so often taking place in my day in these West African territories.

It was necessary to cable for the Admiral from the Cape station, as the natives who had played up in this manner were subjects of the Protectorate, and not of the Niger Company. The Protectorate yacht was prepared as soon as possible, and as many native troops, Hausas and Yorubas, as could be spared, about two hundred all told, were put on board. Then we set out hot foot for the scene of the disaster, Brass River, a tributary of the Niger.

The troops were landed whilst Sir Claude awaited the arrival of Admiral Sir F. Bedford in H.M.S. *St. George*, accompanied by the *Widgeon* and the *Thrush*, and when he came upon the scene the Admiral decided that the bluejackets and marines from the warships, assisted by the Protectorate troops, should attack Nimbi, and punish the insurgents, who had to be taught that they could not with impunity murder other subjects of the Queen, nor sack trading stations.

Captain Child, of the Protectorate Marine Department, although suffering from a severe "go" of fever, went up in one of the launches

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to buoy the channel for the ships which were to take part in the attack, and accomplished this so far as the entrance of the creek—a very deep one—to Nimbi. Pinnaces and patrol boats, with various launches belonging to the Protectorate, were told off, and the twin-screw steamer *Yoruba*, of the Niger Company, was pressed into the service for the foray on Sacrifice Island, which was to be made on the following day.

This island lay at the junction of two creeks, about two miles from where the Nimbi creek joined the Niger River, and across the creek, close to the island, the natives had built a very strong boom of timber, all fastened together with iron bands—an extremely formidable barrier.

One of the pinnaces exploded a charge of gun-cotton in the centre of this defence without clearing it away, whereon the officer in charge, going back some distance, charged the obstacle with the boat, breaking a way through, after the place had been weakened by this means. Other boats bringing troops followed closely, and before long most of the expedition had landed.

In the afternoon the natives of Nimbi appeared in force in their war canoes, beating tom-toms. Each canoe had a big gun in her bows, with which they fired at our men on the island.

The *Yoruba*, which was an ocean-going steamer of some twelve hundred tons, had been brought

Sacrifice Island

up the creek, and moored close alongside the island, with her decks and taffrails protected by sand-bags. It is a marvel how the naval men ever got her up. There was plenty of water, the creek being tidal, but it was so narrow that the mangrove bushes brushed over the taffrail on both sides, whilst its course was tortuous and crooked to a degree.

The natives did no damage by their initial attack, but did not escape so easily themselves, for the distance separating the two parties was under five hundred yards, and our people opened fire upon the canoes with three-pounder quick-firing guns, Maxims, and rifles. They could not stand this for long, and, turning about, all returned to Nimbi.

I was in a launch which unfortunately broke down, and there we were stuck under a bank, near a small creek leading up to the town. Amid the boom of guns and rattle of rifle fire we heard a big tom-tomming approaching us down-river—a war canoe!

I told the men to make ready, for we all expected to have to fight for our lives. The excitement went for nothing, however, and at a big bend in the river sixty yards above us the canoe turned.

We were eventually towed up to Sacrifice Island, where the troops bivouacked for the night.

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At daybreak the order was given to attack Nimbi, and a flotilla was formed, led by a pinnace under the command of the first lieutenant of H.M.S. *St. George*.

Facing down the long creek was a wooden house, one of the principal landing-places to the town, and here the natives had set up some old muzzle-loading guns, loaded with solid shot. So soon as the pinnace came within range, they fired point-blank at the leading boat, their aim, unfortunately, being only too correct, for the first shot hit the edge of the shield, behind which the first lieutenant was standing. Glancing off, the round shot hit the poor fellow in the face, killing him instantly. Another try sent a second death-dealing shot through one of the port-holes.

Now several three-pounders joined in the fray, the boom of which mingled curiously with the incessant chatter of the Maxims and the shrieking war rockets. Presently the firing from the house ceased, a landing was effected, and the bush cleared by the firing of volleys into it—a necessary precaution, for there was a narrow path on which our party might very easily have been ambushed.

I was more or less “on my own,” not being attached to any force in particular, and went at once to the wooden landing-house, where the walls stood honeycombed with Maxim bullets—it would have been hard to find a square foot

The Fight

free from a smattering. Every few feet there gaped a large hole, where a three-pounder shell had penetrated.

On the ground floor, in a room facing the creek, I found the man who had probably fired the shot that killed the lieutenant. A shell had carried away half his head. I counted fifteen bullet holes in his chest, caused, I think, by Maxim fire, whilst he had several more bullet wounds in his legs. Close by I found another native, also dead.

I now joined Major Denny, of the Marines, who was in charge of the land forces, and up a boggy, muddy lane we slipped and staggered, the men firing volleys *en route*. The new seven-pounder belonging to the Protectorate was somehow dragged through the morass, until we came to an open spot, from which the path streaked away to the left. At the end of this path an old nigger, unarmed, walked towards us. The major shouted to him to come to us, motioning him at the same time that he was not to be afraid. Plucking up courage, the native walked into our midst. He was in a dreadful plight from some disease of the skin, and was handed over to the surgeon of the expedition for treatment.

There was a corrugated-iron church fifty yards away on our right, so I left Denny and went off to investigate. I found a straight, broad creek

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six hundred or seven hundred yards long, and half-way up it a small canoe, full of men, was crossing. At the extreme end was a stockade, the defenders of which opened fire on me. Their aim was very bad, being low. I saw the puff of smoke—a man in a white shirt fired the piece—and then the shot ricochetting along the water. I emptied my magazine rifle at the marksman, putting the sights up to six hundred yards, but without hurting him in the very least. The first shot I fired must have gone very close, however, for he jumped behind the stockade like a rabbit. Some marines saluted him with several volleys, but to no purpose. That man came out and loaded his old gun and fired it time after time as though his life was charmed—even as we left the place he let us have a parting reminder. Most of the natives had taken to the bush; a few of the bravest only remained behind to face the troops.

It was a very sad day for the *St. George*, and a curious instance in this connexion was that a year previously, to the exact day, the predecessor of the lieutenant who lost his life in the attack on Nimbi was killed on a similar expedition farther down the coast.

These natives deserved a thrashing for taking the law into their own hands. Of the forty Krooboys whom they had taken prisoner when sacking Akassa not one remained—all had been sacrificed, being beheaded by the machete, a long,

The Island of Ascension

heavy-made knife with a short handle, something like a Japanese sword, but straight in the blade. The young men of Nimbi, who had never before killed a man, were the executioners. The bodies of the victims were afterwards taken to Nimbi from Akassa, and there eaten. A French priest who was in the place at the time saw the orgies perpetrated. I met him when he came down to the Consulate at Brass, and heard his description of the whole occurrence.

After the little war had finished, Grant Dalton asked me if I would like to go a cruise with him in H.M.S. *Widgeon*. I had now been seven months in the Protectorate, and my reason for having gone there at all was to save some money in order that I might spend it in a big-game shoot on the East Coast of Africa.

Several of the *Widgeon's* crew were down with fever, so we sailed for Ascension Island in order that those who needed rest might be sent ashore, go to hospital, and recuperate on fresh food.

The Island of Ascension is unique among the islands of the world, and is not treated as so much land surrounded by water, but as a ship, and tender to the guardship at the Cape of Good Hope station. Here everything was done as on a man-o'-war, and all the work of the place, farming on Green Mountain and turtle-turning, was conducted entirely by marines.

It is a weird spot, for the mountains and

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hills with which Ascension abounds have not a particle of earth or grass on them, being nothing more or less than gigantic hills of clinkers. The island too is often unapproachable owing to the great single and double rollers. Frequently it is impossible to land at the jetty, and a big scoop-net has to be let down from a crane, into which you step and are hauled to terra firma.

As soon as we could get our invalids out of hospital we were bound for St. Helena, and, pending this, I spent my time seeing the sights of the island. Ascension is famous for its edible turtles (the green turtle), which periodically visit its sands to lay their eggs.

With the consent of the captain of the island I sat up one night in order to watch the *modus operandi* of turtle-catching, having to go about three miles over a clinkery path to a tiny shanty of a place, with two bunks in it, where the marines who caught the turtles spent the nights when thus employed.

I could see plenty of turtles swimming about in the sea, disappearing and re-appearing frequently, and was told that in all probability some of them would come up that night.

We each took a nap for two or three hours, as it was useless to go out until 12 p.m., and about that time one of the marines wakened me, and we sallied forth. It was a glorious night, a

Turtle-turning

full moon shone in a cloudless sky, and the sea was as smooth as a mill-pond. Walking along a beach above high-tide mark, we sat down to await developments.

Presently a dark form emerged from what little surf broke upon the beach, and made its way laboriously towards us. This was a cow turtle. We had to be patient until she had performed her maternal duties, when we meant to intercept her as she returned to the sea. After what seemed to me an eternity, but what in reality must have been less than an hour, a movement seaward on the turtle's part prompted my companion to run towards her. The gait of the creature was so slow and leisurely that it was not difficult to stop her well above high-water mark.

The marine seized one fore flipper and slipped a noose round the shoulder of same, and putting another noose, formed in the other end of the rope, on the other flipper, tied them, as tight as he could pull, across the turtle's back. Then with a big heave he succeeded in turning her on to her back, twisting her sideways once or twice in order to make a trough in the sand, which would fit her shell. Finding a large stone he put a piece of old canvas on it, and laid the turtle's head on the stone as a sort of pillow. I understood that if this rite was omitted a turtle would suffocate.

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After the great heat of the day it was delightful to lie on the sands, still warm to the touch. Although Ascension is close on the same degree of latitude as Calabar the heat is tempered by the trade winds, and it is quite possible to walk about with no other head-covering than a cap, whereas in Calabar a sun-helmet and white umbrella is a necessity.

We turned three more turtles on this beach, treating them in a similar manner to the first victim, and then went on to another stretch of sand. I was anxious to see the *modus operandi* of a turtle's egg-laying, and the opportunity occurred within the next half-hour after our arrival. The wind—what there was of it—was blowing straight from the turtle to me, so I carefully stalked her until I was within thirty yards. When I started my stalk she had not arrived above high-water mark, and she halted two or three times during her journey, so that at every step I was fearful that she had seen me. By remaining very still, and advancing when she advanced, I was at last enabled to reach a spot almost within touching distance.

First she scooped a shallow hollow for her body with her fore flippers, and being satisfied with this, proceeded to use her hind paddles exactly in the way that I should take up a handful of sand should I want to make a small, straight hole. The peculiarity in her method

Turtle-turning

was this. She employed her hind paddles alternately, and when one lifted up its load of sand, the other, with a spasmodic flick, would scatter the previous handful broadcast. I was so close to her that the sand hit me in the face with quite an appreciable sting.

I now retreated, for I could see no more, since my turtle had delved a hole directly behind her, and rejoined my companion to await the time when our quarry should have deposited her eggs.

I dug up some of the eggs to look at them—they are soft-shelled, white in colour, and in size nearly as large as a tennis-ball. A turtle, having laid a complement of eggs, covers them with sand, trusting to the heat of the sun to hatch out the young, who, on reaching the sea, have a precarious enough time of it, for their enemies are waiting to devour them in the water, whilst the gulls do likewise as the small turtles hurry over the sand to the water. A small percentage, therefore, arrive at maturity, when they attain an approximate weight of five hundred pounds.

Next morning we signalled to the station with a semaphore, saying we had been successful in our catch, whereon a small steamboat arrived to bring the turtles in. The method of getting them on board was as simple as it was effective. To the centre of the fin ropes, now slackened, but not taken off, a long thin line was attached,



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which had at the other end of it a small wooden buoy. The turtle was turned back to a natural position, and allowed to enter the sea, where a man in a small boat lay in wait. So soon as he was able to get hold of the wooden buoy, which floated on the surface, with a strong boat-hook, and marked the turtle's whereabouts, he hauled on the line until she appeared, when he took the fin ropes, with which the fore paddles were still loosely tied, and hauled on these until the back of her shell was up tight against the stern of the dinghy. Then he took a turn round the seat to make all fast, and rowed off with his victim to the steamer, where she was hoisted aboard and laid on her back on the deck.

When we had loaded all our night's catch, we sailed for the station, and the turtles were put into a stew, or enclosure, built out into the sea, where the water entered freely. Here they remained until they were needed for food. The killing of one is a great undertaking, and is accomplished by tricing them up on a small tripod when their throats are cut; they take a long time to die, which makes their slaughter a disagreeable business.

Turtles, as is well known, live to a great age, growing very slowly. They are vegetarians, living mostly on a species of ribbon grass that grows luxuriantly about Ascension Island.

Turtle soup as made by Ring and Brymer is

“ Wide-awake Fair ”

one thing, and that manufactured by a man-o'-war's cook another ! Defend me from ever sampling such a mixture again as the latter !

Ascension is also the nesting resort of the black-headed tern, or sea-swallow. Imagine a piece of fairly level ground—known locally as “ Wide-awake Fair ”—measuring 150 yards by 200, so covered with birds and eggs that it is almost impossible to avoid stepping on one or the other. The islanders get their egg supplies from this spot when the birds are nesting, and this is how they manage it. They mark off a few square yards with sticks and string, throw out all the eggs they can collect in this enclosure so that none remain, and on visiting the Fair next day find a fresh supply of eggs lying about within the enclosure, all of which they know to be new-laid.

The cries of the thousands of birds are bewildering, and a never-ending stream passes between the shore and sea, bringing small fish in their beaks. How in the world parent birds manage to find their young, or the old ones their mates, puzzled me. There must have been hundreds of thousands of birds on the spot.

There was any amount of good fishing to be had round the island. One day I caught ninety-eight cavallhoes, a fish weighing about ten pounds. The bait used was a bit of white handkerchief, tied on to the shank of the hook, the

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end of the linen being teased out into streamers. Occasionally I lost the hook, and the greater part of the thick line, owing to a tuna or tunny-fish taking the bait. With a rod and line specially built for the purpose great sport might be had with these latter fish.

On board the *Widgeon* we had run short of food supplies, and anxiously awaited the arrival of the Government steamer in order that we might replenish our commissariat, which had come down to salt pork and weevily ship's biscuits.

After a few more days in Ascension we sailed for St. Helena, where I meant to leave the *Widgeon* as she was bound for Tristan D'Acunha, an island in the South Atlantic. Once a year a warship called at this lonely island to find out if the few inhabitants, who lived in the most primitive way, obtaining what supplies they could not produce themselves from passing whalers, required a doctor or other assistance.

On arrival at Georgetown, St. Helena, I made a pilgrimage to Longwood, immortalized by its connexion with Napoleon, and hearing that a small bungalow was to be let I took it for a month.

Longwood is situated on the very highest part of the island, and Longwood Old House, built on a great plateau, is more or less as it was when Napoleon died. Within half a mile of the house is the place where he was first buried.

A Huge Tortoise

I spent my days on the island in pursuing the wily red-legged partridge, a few of which were to be found on the slopes of the rocky hills ; and in trying to shoot a wild goat on a semi-detached peninsula, known as the Barn Rock. These goats, the offspring of tame ones run wild, are extremely difficult to stalk, and are quite as wary and agile as any animal I have ever bagged.

Dinizulu, the deported king of the Zulus, was at this time a prisoner on St. Helena, and occupied a small villa outside Georgetown. He was quite an intelligent nigger, and not so fat as he subsequently became. He had with him as fellow-prisoners two or three of his uncles and head Indunas, who all wore a kaross of skins and head-rings, whilst Dinizulu himself was dressed in the most up-to-date clothes. All of them had the most extraordinarily lengthy finger-nails—quite an inch long.

At the Governor's house a gigantic Galapagos Island tortoise, like the largest ones in the Zoo, was kept. They can move along quite easily with a fair-sized child astride their shells. A safe mount, but slow.

CHAPTER VI

Cape Town—Beira—Fontesvilla—The Begamiti flats—Wildebeest—Lions—Zebras—Death of Jack—Novel Hyæna trap.

Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away ;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.—ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

I LEFT St. Helena, in one of the Union Castle liners, for the Cape, and on arrival at Cape Town was offered quarters on the *St. George* by Admiral Bedford, where I remained for a few happy days. I had, however, to push on to Durban and Delagoa Bay on my way to Beira, where I was already overdue.

I was not prepossessed by the appearance of Beira as it was in my time. It consisted of a few houses, an hotel or two, and several stores and warehouses built on a sand-spit. A more depressing or unhealthy place it would be hard to discover.

In 1905 the railway was not built from Fontesvilla to Beira, and the journey had to be made in a small steamer, up the Pungwe River, a trip taking some seven hours.

I obtained my licence to shoot big game, and paid the tax on my rifles, which consisted of a

The Begamiti Flats

double eight-bore Paradox, carrying ten drams of powder and a three-ounce specially hardened bullet, a .577 double Express Blackpowder, and a double hammerless ejector .303.

At Fontesvilla my black boy Tom joined me, having come down the coast to Cape Town in one of the warships, after the Nimbi palaver. I also engaged a professional hunter, Kopping by name, to take me out on a short trip in the immediate vicinity. For at the time of which I am writing buffalo, hartebeest, wildebeest, lions, quagga, and bushbuck could be obtained by going out from the hotel and returning the same evening. Professional hunters made a fair living by shooting game of all kinds, selling the flesh to the hotel and others, and the horns and skins to visitors.

Kopping could only come with me for a short while, as he was bespoken by another sportsman, who was expected any day.

We engaged a few boys as porters, bought in sufficient stores, and marched for the Begamiti flats.

Being somewhat late in setting out, we were unable to complete the desired distance in the first day, and therefore camped in a small grass hut of which Kopping often made use. It was almost dark when we came on the place, and the entrance was so low that I had to go down on my hands and knees to crawl into it at all.

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Lighting a wax match to examine the interior, I saw a green Mamba snake coiled upon the ground within three feet of my face. It only took me the eighth of a second to get outside, for I had no weapon in my hand. Kopping and I entered again, and whilst I lit a match he made a furious smite at the reptile, missing it badly. The last we saw of it was a flickering tail disappearing into the grass forming the side of the hut. This was not a very promising beginning! It is not exactly pleasant to think that a poisonous snake lies within three feet of your head. However, it did not molest us, and we never saw it again.

Next morning, soon after daybreak, we went on to a better camping-ground, situated on the banks of a small river ten miles off, where I spent the greater part of the afternoon fixing up my tent and making things ship-shape. In the evening I took my .577 and went after a herd of wildebeest, and managed to get close up to a decent bull—a fairly easy job, as the grass was unburnt, and three or four feet high. I fired when I got the chance, and distinctly heard the thud of the bullet, but the whole herd rushed off, to stop again some four hundred yards away. There they all stood, facing me, tossing their heads high in the air. Presently the one I had shot at drew away and lay down, and off went the rest.

Lions

Walking to the prone beast, I found him stone dead, and after taking his head and neckskin and a plentiful supply of meat, I went back to camp. Throughout the night lions roared on every side of us—they seemed to collect together and voice their troubles in unison. There was but little hope of bagging His Majesty at this season. The grass had not been burnt, and everywhere it stood higher than a lion's back. The one chance was to kill a buffalo as bait and then revisit the carcass at daybreak, when a lion would probably be found feeding. Not so easy as it sounds. The leaving of a dead beast was hard of accomplishment. For almost as the breath left it hundreds of vultures, or aasvogels, appeared from all points, ready to break up and devour in an incredibly short space any carcass that might be to hand, and nothing but a few bones and skin would be left to attract anything. A buffalo bull's skin is so tough that it alone could resist the onslaught of the scavengers.

Though we wanted a buffalo badly we could not then come across one, although a small herd of two hundred regularly frequented these plains. Kopping accounted for their absence by saying that ~~the~~ wind had been blowing steadily from one quarter for some days, and that as these beasts feed up-wind they had wisely headed out of our immediate district.

Kopping and I started out as soon as it was

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light on the second day, but with the exception of the herd of blue wildebeest, of which I had bagged a bull, all the game was extremely wild from being so constantly hunted by professionals.

We came upon a small troop of zebras, locally and wrongly known as quaggas, but there isn't much satisfaction to be got out of slaying a zebra, and as meat it is useless also, for the boys will not touch it. There were a great number of these harmless beasts about. Far too many, indeed, for a hunter's liking. For they are apt to give warning of the stalker's presence to a more desirable quarry.

On the way back to camp I was within an ace of stepping on a coiled-up puff-adder. Really, it is very curious, when you come to think of it, that more accidents do not happen to hunters in thick grass.

Kopping had with him a small Irish terrier puppy, and presently the dog began to growl, and all his hair on-ended. I was close to a thick belt of reeds. Accidentally we had stumbled on a lion's lair. The occupant cleared out as we came, and the grass swayed as the beast swept through. But the cover was so thick we could neither of us get in a shot. We both saw him as he crossed a small open space one hundred yards off, but only for a fraction of a second. I examined the place where the beast had been

Lions

lying up. There were three or four large bones that had been greatly gnawed, and the smell of lion was very strong.

Nothing would induce that dog to enter the place; his tail was tucked tight between his legs, and he looked, and probably felt, scared to death.

That night lions roared incessantly quite close to camp; one of them must have been within fifty yards of us. I took the precaution to load my .577, which seemed to amuse Kopping, who told me he never loaded his old Martini. At night, he said, if a lion came for us, it would be too late to shoot. I differed from him, for I did not see the use of groping around in the dark looking for cartridges when by a little foresight the rifle could be loaded and ready for an emergency. We argued the matter for some time, and I happened to say he would pay the penalty one day for his carelessness, little dreaming that within a month this man would be killed by a lion, the whole tribe of which he so openly scorned. It happened that, after he had been out in this part of the veldt with Lord Ennismore, he one day went out by himself, accompanied only by one or two boys. Chancing to come upon a lion, a mangy one too, he wounded it, and had no time to reload his rifle before the beast came for him, killing him almost instantly. Had he been accompanied by another white

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man, or been armed with a double-barrel rifle, the story might have had quite another ending. He had the greatest contempt for lions, and paid the penalty of that contempt with his life. Personally I should always keep my rifle loaded in a country fairly swarming with these beasts, and I proved later on the truth of my conviction.

I had left Fontesvilla when this unfortunate occurrence took place, and was in Salisbury, but before going up there, I had occasion to go down to Beira. It was on a Sunday evening that I left Fontesvilla in the small steamer. The captain's name was "Dicky," or, at all events, that is the name he went by. There was only one passenger besides myself, an Englishman, who was on his way to catch the steamer to Durban. We had to take down with us a large empty lighter, which was made fast fore and aft to the port side of the steamer. All went well until we rounded a big bend in the river about four miles from our starting-place. Here the current took charge of the lighter, which yawed dangerously away from our side. Jack, the mate, ran forrard to haul on the big hawser as Dicky put the helm up to bring the two together again, and was hauling away with all his might and main to take up the slack round a bollard on deck, when an accident happened. In order to get more purchase in pulling, the poor man put his right foot on the taffrail. At this moment

Death of Jack

the current, which was running very strongly, again caught the lighter, and in an instant the big rope drew taut, catching poor Jack's foot between it and the taffrail ledge, and cutting it clean off just above his boot, which fell over the side. I was sitting yarning with my companion in the stern of the steamer when I heard Dicky shouting and cursing in a most frantic manner. I did not move for a few seconds until he came running aft, saying, "Come here, you something-or-other passengers, Jack has lost his leg." I went forrard, finding poor Jack propped up abaft the wheel-house. Blood was spurting from the wound in a continuous stream. It was now almost dark. I seized the flag halyards, a length of which I cut down, and made Dicky get me a belaying-pin, and with this primitive outfit, put a tourniquet just above the wound, which stopped the flow of blood. Then I put a pad on the inside of his thigh over the artery, and put another tourniquet over this, twisting it up as tight as I dared. I then gave him a dose of neat brandy, for he had lost a great quantity of blood, and told Dicky to cast the lighter adrift and steam back to Fontesvilla as fast as he could. This he proceeded to do, but it took us three-quarters of an hour or more to get there against that strong stream. When we arrived within a short distance, Dicky kept the whistle going in order to let people know something was

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wrong. My fear was that Jack would collapse from sheer loss of blood and exhaustion, and for this reason I plied him with the only stimulant I had—brandy. The doctor usually lived at the eighty-mile peg, away up the line, in the hills. It was odds against his being about, as he did not come to Fontesvilla once a month unless specially sent for, but as luck would have it, he had arrived that afternoon, as it was a Sunday. The long and the short of it was that he operated on the leg, but he had to do so more than once, as the bone was splintered right up to the knee, Jack unfortunately succumbing from the shock. I cannot imagine what I should have done had not the doctor been there. It would have taken some hours to have brought him to Fontesvilla, even had he been at home and not on a visit to some patient. I might have been obliged to take the man's leg off myself. I had the necessary antiseptics and bandages, and would, failing every other means of saving his life, have attempted the task of amputation. I had on that short trip back to the township decided that I would take the leg off at the knee if I had been compelled to try. For I was certain that a pinch such as that caused by the hawser must have smashed the leg-bone into splinters. Thank goodness! I had not to attempt the task, but it might very easily have been otherwise.

As I have previously said, the line ended on

Novel Hyæna Trap

the one hand at Fontesvilla, on the other at Chimoio, one hundred and twenty miles off. Each mile of this railway, the gauge of which, when I passed over it, was but two-feet-four, was marked by a wooden post which was known locally as a "peg"; thus the railway officials spoke of the seven-mile peg, seventeen-mile peg, and so on, to represent the distance from Fontesvilla. For the first forty miles the track is laid through a very flat country; here game could be seen in any quantity on both sides of the line, the commonest species being quagga, blue wildebeest, hartebeest, sassaby, bushbuck, and sometimes buffalo, lion, and, more rarely, elephants. Lions were extremely plentiful on this large plain, which was not to be wondered at, seeing that there was so much game for them to prey on. Whilst on the subject of lions, I may mention that on my return journey two months later to Fontesvilla I met at this place a Mr. Lamb, who went up the following morning after my arrival to forty-mile peg to try and shoot some buffalo. At or near the seventeen-mile peg he saw twelve lions cross the railway track in front of the train! He had his rifle with him, and shot at several of them, wounding one lioness, which, however, he failed to bag.

The country now had most of the long grass burned off it, so that it was possible to see what game there was in the district. The young grass

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that soon sprouted up after the burning formed splendid grazing for the herds of animals that frequented this place. On my way to Chimoio we stopped at the forty-mile peg to allow the only other train that ran in the day to pass us, our train being side-tracked for that purpose. Here we took on board the tender of the engine a further supply of fuel, which consisted of wood sawn up into short lengths, a gang of natives doing the cutting, stacking, and loading the engine.

Close to the station at this place I found a novel form of hyæna trap—a round piece of dried ox-hide, as hard as a board, three feet or so in diameter, in which a very small hole, no larger than a small apple, had been cut. Radiating from this hole were cut a series of V-shaped pieces. The trap was set as follows: A hole was dug in the ground about one foot deep and six inches in diameter. Into this hole a piece of meat was placed, and the ox-hide plate was laid over the place containing the meat, the two holes being one over the other. The ox-hide was then pegged down with wooden pegs in three or more places. The hyæna, on finding the bait, forced his head through the small hole in the ox-hide to obtain it, the cuts in the hide giving way sufficiently for that purpose. The beast seized the meat, but on trying to withdraw his head had to use considerable force, which



A MASHONA VILLAGE

Novel Hyæna Trap

naturally drew the pegs that held the ox-hide to the ground, the result being that the poor brute had a collar securely fastened round his neck which he was quite unable to get rid of. He could not run or walk, and even had he been able to go any distance encumbered by such an obstacle, would have been brought up short in the first patch of bush or grass he encountered. He was now at the mercy of the individual who had set the trap, and could be put out of the way quite easily.

A hyæna can and does perform the office of scavenger in the countries that he frequents; his jaws are so extraordinarily powerful that he cracks up and demolishes with the greatest ease the rib-bones of a horse, or other large animals, such as a lion will not even attempt to break up, and probably could not do so even were he to try. I once gave a caged hyæna in Germany a shin-bone of a horse. He had been kept short of food for a day in order that my experiment might get a fair trial. Now this bone is extremely thick and hard. I had been told that these brutes could break them up, and so I determined to see, and tested the matter for myself. On giving him the bone, which he held between his fore-paws, after some minutes' hard work, he managed to get a large splinter off it, some four inches in length, but unfortunately it became wedged across the roof of his mouth,

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necessitating the interference of the keeper with an iron rake, who hit the end of it, thus freeing the piece. After that the matter seemed easy to him; this, too, although his mouth bled freely from being cut by the splinter. He eventually got at the marrow, which he seemed to enjoy, and I then gave him a big hunk of lean horse beef to reward him for his efforts. Other people have so often described the howls of these beasts that it would be superfluous on my part to remark upon what can be heard at any time in the London Zoo, by getting one of the keepers to stir up the specimens that are caged there. It is a ghastly sound at night, and is said to be often uttered to give the clan notice that food is to be obtained. This latter statement I somewhat doubt, for of all the sneakish, selfish, squabbling brutes, the hyæna easily holds the palm. These beasts skulk about camp, annexing anything they can pack off without molestation, and were a source of much annoyance to me on more than one occasion.

CHAPTER VII

East Africa, Beira, Chimoio—Fire at Lloyd's Store—Umtali—
A Saddle-ox — Salisbury — Marandella's — Locusts — Eland
and Sable Antelope—The Honey-bird—Lion-bait.

I know how time will ravage,
How time will level, and yet
I long with a longing savage,
I regret with a fierce regret.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

THE journey to Chimoio is very interesting. The train went slowly, never more than fifteen miles an hour, puffing and panting up the inclines. From the forty-mile peg the way was all against collar, and at one steep place the air swarmed with a flight of locusts. Millions of them, on the railway lines, everywhere. I am not Ananias enough to suggest that they stopped the train by weight of numbers, but it is a fact that the engine wheels squashed so many of the insects that the wheels could not get a grip on the metals, and the guard brought sand from a barrel and laid it on the metals both sides, which device enabled us to proceed. At Chimoio the rail ended, and we had to take to a light waggon drawn by bullocks. The Hottentot driver of this ramshackle concern was frightfully drunk, so

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much so, in fact, that he went to sleep on the box, leaving the oxen in the custody of a small boy.

The heat, the jolting, and the dust made this part of the journey a perfect nightmare. There were four passengers beside myself—all men.

After about three or four hours, the driver, who was now awake, proceeded to try and walk beside his team, and presently lagged some distance behind. Coming upon a deep spruit full of water, which came well over the box of the wheels, we hurried through it, hoping that our drunken henchman would get sobered if he had to wade it. We did not have the chance that day of seeing the effect of *aqua pura* on this individual, for he did not turn up again until next morning, when we started afresh from Lloyd's Store—a sort of wayside hotel. We slept in native huts, which were, however, built for the occupation of white people, and furnished after a fashion that was not altogether uncomfortable. After we had had some supper in the main building, we four passengers turned in for the night, only to be kept awake by singing and laughing in another hut some few paces away; evidently the occupants were making a night of it. Some one upset a candle in this hut, which set on fire the flimsy reed and wattle. I heard the shout of "Fire!" and rushed out to see two men tumble out of the now fiercely burning

A Saddle-ox

place. I went to the door, and managed to drag out our host, who had been overcome by the smoke. The hut adjoining caught fire from flying sparks alighting on the thatch with which it was covered, but by hard work we confined the damage to these two buildings, then tumbled back into bed, where we spent the rest of that eventful night without further mishap.

Next morning our driver of yesterday having again put in an appearance, we resumed our journey towards Umtali. At one place where we halted for lunch, I saw the ugly skull of a baboon which possessed the largest pair of canine teeth I have ever seen out of any but the head of one of the largest of the *carnivoræ*.

I thought that ox-waggon ride would never come to an end. How I loathed it! I would infinitely rather have walked the distance. A journey such as this seems doubly long if the road on which the traveller passes is unfamiliar to him.

Arrived at the hotel at Umtali, the first thing I did was to have a bath in order to try and rid myself of that penetrating brick-red dust with which I was smothered. This made me feel better, and I wandered about the place, seeing what few sights there were in this town. I was standing on the step of the hotel when I saw a man trotting up to the house, mounted on an ox. He sat on an ordinary saddle, but, instead of bit and reins, guided his mount with a piece

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of cord which was passed through the cartilage of the beast's nose, and was travelling at quite a good pace too, at least seven miles an hour. I took several photos of him, one of which I reproduce. Unfortunately one of the plates I took, and which the oxman (to coin a new name) was good enough to aid me in by trotting backwards and forwards to show off his mount's paces, was broken on my arrival at Salisbury. This man told me that he rode in from the Penhalonga Gold Mines, eight miles off, once or twice a week, to get the local letters.

On resuming our journey next day on a conveyance that was in every respect superior to the waggon—it was a Yankee stage-coach (like the famous Deadwood coach that appeared in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in London some years ago), well swung on leathern straps, drawn by six mules, and driven by a nigger—we got on famously over the ground, considering the sandy and desperate nature of the road, and swung and bumped all over the place. But, as I have said, it was a distinct move in the right direction as to comfort. At length Salisbury was reached. We pulled up with a flourish at the hotel and stretched our aching limbs. Food and drink at this place seemed to be at famine prices, Bass's beer being twelve shillings a bottle and fresh eggs twenty-four shillings a dozen, whilst other things were correspondingly expensive. In the



A SADDLE-ON

Salisbury

bar of the hotel was to be found every sort and condition of man who had come in for a drink and chat, or was merely on the prowl. You ordered drinks, but were not asked to pay cash for same. Of course, they did not refuse to take the coin of the realm, but it was the custom to sign a "Good for," or piece of paper with your name. These were ultimately totalled in a bill for the whole amount, covering perhaps a week or a month, according as your credit was at high or low water. I found my little batch embodied in my weekly bill at the hotel. This system saved trouble and time to the bar tender, and was, I take it, of considerable assistance to some of the men who were habitually "stony-broke," but who paid when they could. It seems that ready cash is not always the best form of exchange in a business such as this ; a man will often drink more or give away more if he is not asked to weigh in at once with the "ready." A man, even if he knew no trade, could easily earn his ten shillings a day, whilst a mechanic or mason, or one who knew his particular trade well, could earn twice this amount, but it must be remembered that the cost of living was correspondingly high, so that little, if any, money was to be saved. At the time I speak of all stores had to be transported from the nearest rail-head in ox-waggon. The freighters charged, and made, good money, but the stuff was a long

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time on the road, oxen were scarce, and consequently expensive to buy. They were too often dying from redwater or rinderpest, bitten by the tsetse fly, or some other deadly ailment peculiar to cattle, so that it is not to be wondered at that transport riders, as they are termed, made their hay when the sun shone.

There was nothing much for me to do in Salisbury, most of the men in the place having work that occupied them during the daytime, whilst the town itself could be seen in an hour, the hospital, church, and Club being the principal buildings. I met F. C. Selous one day. He was passing through the town with his wife on the way to a farm he owned. His waggons had gone on ahead, whilst he was riding on horseback.

I soon tired of doing nothing, so collected an assortment of boys, who, with the addition of a Hottentot rascal I engaged as interpreter, numbered just over twenty. I meant to shoot on my way back to Chimoio, going into the country in any likely place I could hear of, for the game had been driven far away from the transport road.

At Marandella's Post I left the road, going to stay a night with a man who had a farm ten miles away. He was very kind and hospitable, offering to accompany me if I would wait a day or so in order that he could make the necessary



MASHONA WOMEN ACTING AS CARRIERS

Marandella's

arrangements, and two days later we struck off into the mountains fifteen or twenty miles from his house. This house, by the way, was interesting because the owner had, aided by some native women, made and burnt all the bricks of which it was built. He was about to finish off the thatching of the roof when I was with him, accomplishing this by sewing on the grass with raw hide strings to the rafters.

The day after leaving this man's place I saw for the first time my boys smoking the native hemp. They made in some way a sort of hubble-bubble pipe in the earth, each in turn sucking a long breath of the smoke. The coughing that then ensued was evidently painful, their eyes streamed with tears, but they seemed to enjoy the experience, which was the main thing, I suppose.

The hills in the district we now were in were evidently the happy hunting-grounds of natives, for their traps were everywhere in evidence. Some of them were pitfalls, but without any stake at the bottom. These were shaped like a "V," six or more feet long, the sides on the top three feet wide tapering to nothing at the depth of perhaps five feet. A buck getting into such a place would, of course, become wedged in the sloping sides. There were, too, a great many artificially made brush fences, with openings in them at intervals, evidently intended to catch

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the smaller buck, such as duiker, etc. In these gaps were nooses ingeniously contrived, which, on being trodden upon by any unwary animal, would cause the victim to be suspended in the air by a leg. This form of trap was between that of a mole-trap such as is used in England and the common figure of 4 device.

On the morning after our arrival at this place the whole country was overwhelmed with a huge flight of locusts. The trees and bushes were just coming into full leaf, everything looked bright and promising. What a difference this horde made to everything green in the short space of one day—they had devoured everything! In the evening when the sun goes down they take roost on bushes and trees, literally covering the whole of the branches and twigs. They do not take flight in the morning until the sun has risen for some time and attained to some strength. They appear to be lethargic owing to the cold nights, and only leave their night quarters when evidently warmed up to the occasion. It is a strange experience to walk through a country that is overwhelmed by such a swarm. They rise in front of you in millions; it is as though you were traversing a field on which were thickly strewn animated red leaves. The noise they make too, as they fly up, is quite distinct from any other sound I have ever heard. I could not help wondering what

Locusts

reason nature could have in cursing a country with such a devastating insect. The natives eat them, but before doing so, roast them over the embers of a fire. My boys had quite a meal of them this day, but I could not bring myself to sampling their food. From what I saw, their method of procedure was to take off their heads and legs before they devoured them.

I saw a silver jackal making a meal of some locusts that had been left behind after the main body had passed on. I watched this beast for some time as he ran about picking them up, and eventually stalked and killed him with a .303 bullet. I should have liked to be able to get a dozen such animals, for their coats, when sewn together, make a very handsome rug, or kaross, as it is termed in Africa. I did not, however, get a shot at another whilst I was in the country. These karosses can often be purchased from the natives, but are expensive in any part where the white man has his stores—another case of supply and demand !

I had very bad luck with a sable bull one day when I was on this mountain. I hit him very hard with an expanding .303 bullet. I wanted one of these heads badly, for I had practically come to this place on purpose to get one, and, if possible, a roan antelope bull. My companion had a greyhound cur with him, which by some ill-fate would follow me. When I shot at the

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sable he promptly gave chase—nothing I could do would restrain the brute. I felt furious enough to shoot at the dog, but refrained, hoping that after all the sable was so badly hit that he would soon succumb. There was a great deal of blood spoor, which my boys and I proceeded to follow up. We walked at least a mile all downhill, to be joined at last by the dog, who returned on his tracks. Now we were at fault completely, as the spoor led us into very dense country, where no doubt the beast had lain down so soon as the dog left him. This piece of bush was perhaps a mile square, clothing the bottom of a valley through which a shallow stream had its course. I spent the best part of that day trying to find the spoor again, and even tried to get that useless dog to help us, but I was obliged to give it up in the end, as it seemed to be entirely hopeless. This was the only shot I ever had at a sable bull, although I killed a cow two days later, more because we had no meat in camp than because I wanted her head as a trophy.

It is amazing what a quantity of fresh meat niggers will eat, they literally gorge themselves. A buck goes nowhere—one has to kill game whether one likes it or not. The meal of the country, which you have to buy for them, is all very well when they are in their kraals, but when with the white man hunting they expect as much meat as they can dispose of.

Eland and Sable Antelope

I killed a very nice eland bull at this place, and some of the meat we made into biltong. This was done by cutting the meat into long strips, salting in a heap for a few hours, then hanging it up to dry in the sun. This antelope is the only one of the various kinds I shot that had any fat on it—this bull was full of it. My boys would have annexed the whole lot if a watchful eye had not been kept upon them. As it was, I saw three or four pots full that they had stolen, and which they had melted down for future consumption.

Whilst on the hills looking for game with three or four boys, a Matabele boy, who was a favourite of mine, whom I had nicknamed "Cooe," and made my gun-bearer, touched me on the shoulder and pointed to a small brownish-coloured bird that chattered on a small tree close to the path we were on. This chattering I can only liken to the repeated shutting of the lid of a small wooden box, but so rapidly executed that the sound seemed to be almost continuous. I did not understand what my boy meant to convey to me. He pointed to the bird and then to his mouth, so I told him to "Hamba," which I thought meant "Go on." He at once went towards the bird, which thereupon flew on to another small bush a little farther away. We all followed, having left the path, and this follow-my-leader went on for

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perhaps half a mile, the bird keeping just in front of us, until suddenly I missed it. The boys, too, began to look round. Cooe pointed to a hole in a tree, which numbers of bees were entering and leaving. He took an axe from another of my boys and hit the bole of the tree, which sounded quite hollow. The entrance to the beehive which Cooe then started to cut in and enlarge was but four or five feet from the ground. The bees came out in crowds, stinging him and one of my other boys; the third, having no use for bees and their stings, cleared out to a respectful distance, where he awaited developments. I remained all the time close to the tree. The bees did not molest me, except in the case of one that settled on my left hand, and I brushed this one off before it had time to sting me. In a short time Cooe had cut a hole sufficiently large to permit his pulling out with his hands some lovely combs of virgin honey. He also gathered a lot of combs with the young bees or pupæ in it (this is, I believe, termed "bee-bread"). Out of that hole he must have taken at least twenty pounds of honeycomb. I wondered how we were going to get it all back to my camp, but it was done by him in this way. He stripped from off a tree a large semicircular piece of bark, then he hit up the ends with the head of the axe, making an altogether satisfactory dish three feet long by

The Honey-bird

eighteen inches wide, and into this he put the honey. Placing the makeshift dish on his woolly pate with a grin, he was ready to start.

Cooe rewarded the bird by crumbling up some of the comb that had the young bees in it, then, scratching a little earth aside with his assegai, placed the broken comb there, lightly re-covering it with earth. On many subsequent occasions I followed these birds. All my boys were honey gluttons, especially Cooe; they evidently preferred the comb with the young bees within it, for they stuffed their mouths full of it—another proof that there is no accounting for taste.

With reference to this bird, there is no sort of doubt but that they deliberately call the wayfarer's attention by chattering. I have tried them by persistently ignoring their summons, sometimes owing to my not having time to follow it up, or to see what the bird would do in such a case. I found that they will track you for some time, but give it up as a bad business if you do not shortly take any notice of them. I take it that from time immemorial the natives have appreciated their feathered allies by leaving some of the comb as a reward, the birds being unable to obtain their favourite diet without human assistance. The trick has therefore almost become an hereditary instinct!

In this part of the country I noticed a great many native beehives, which are placed in the

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trees amongst the limbs ; most of those I saw were oblong in shape and pointed at one end. I did not notice any bees entering or leaving any of these hives, although I looked carefully at many of them through my glasses. Honey is supposed by some white men I met in this region to be responsible for fever. I had fever many times, but I can honestly say I did not attribute the illness to this cause. I ate so much of it during that trip that had there been any truth in the idea I should for certain have had chronic malaria.

Before I left Umtali for the low country, I bought a she-donkey as bait for lions. This beast had a foal at foot, which I had no use for, leaving it behind. It was, I understood, weaned, and could do without its dam. I took this donkey with me, but had the greatest difficulty to persuade her to go at all. We came to a small stream over which three logs had been placed to take the place of a foot bridge, and my boys pushed and half carried the donkey on to this crazy structure. When they were all in the centre of it, the logs rolled apart, and into the stream went boys, donkey, and what remained of the bridge. The water was deep, my boys swam to the bank, which was very steep. I then told off another seven or eight to go down and help get the donkey out. This was a proceeding that was too ludicrous, for several had hold of

Lion-bait

that poor beast by legs, tail, ears, and even the skin. At least a dozen of my twenty boys were mixed up in the fray, and by their combined efforts the donkey was on terra firma once more, and on the desired side of the stream. I was so sorry for her and for her evident distress at leaving her foal that I sent her back with two of my boys to Umtali, where she arrived in due course. She travelled as gaily as possible on her homeward track, and was going surprisingly fast when I lost sight of her. Donkeys are an excellent bait for lions, for these beasts are extremely partial to them, and will dare a great deal to obtain their favourite food. I had meant to build a "scherm" or hut of stakes, put the donkey within, and sit up myself to look after her, and at the same time any lions who might attempt to get a meal cheaply. My plans, however, were frustrated by the donkey herself, who would have none of me or my schemes.

CHAPTER VIII

Eland—Lions—Baboons—Return to Fontesvilla—Guinea-fowl
—Shoot Waterbuck—The Dingi-Dingi—Lions—Buffalo—
Warthogs.

Here stand we both, and aim we at the best.—HENRY VI.

NEXT I went hunting eland, putting up at a primitive store, and going out the day after my arrival, was lucky enough to find a herd of some five-and-twenty of these grand beasts, with a splendid bull amongst them.

The country was like an English park, lovely glades, and here and there gigantic trees—an ideal spot for game.

I left my three boys in the distance, and accompanied only by Cooe, managed to stalk the big bull to within eighty yards. I could not get a shot at him, as he was surrounded by cows and calves, some lying down, and I must have lain hidden behind some bushes for twenty minutes when the whole herd became alarmed, having, as I feared, sighted the boys, whom I had particularly enjoined to keep out of sight. The position became much worse when the eland bunched themselves into a dense mass,



ELAND
Oreos canna

Lions

looking steadily in the direction whence I had come, and I had to wait another half-hour before an old cow started to walk off, the bull bringing up the rear. There was, however, a cow with very long horns walking almost beside him, intercepting what might otherwise have been a fine chance. I had to take the opportunity that now offered itself as the bull stopped for a fraction of a second, and, aiming behind his shoulder, hit him very hard. He still kept on, however, the whole herd now breaking into a fast run. I fired a second barrel at my bull as he disappeared through some thick bush, hitting him again. Cooe and I then ran up to the place where we had last seen them, and found plenty of blood spoor on the twigs and grass. We followed this for another hundred yards, and came upon the bull dead on the edge of another small glade. This was the best eland I obtained whilst on my trip, and I was accordingly delighted. I sent Cooe back for the other three boys, in the meanwhile I skinned out the neck of my prize preparatory to cutting off his head. I did not open the carcass, as I proposed bringing out all my boys on the following morning to bring in the hide and all the meat.

I was foolish enough to remain at the station next day in order to properly prepare the skin and skull of the eland I had got, sending Cooe and the whole lot of boys to the kill. On their

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return late that afternoon they told the owner of the station that when they arrived near the place they saw five lions and lionesses eating the carcass, most of the best of the meat being consumed and the hide spoilt. I was extremely sick at my bad luck in not having gone out with them, for I should most assuredly have obtained an easy shot at a lion, which was the height of my ambition. I visited the place early next morning, but the bones were picked clean, nothing but a mangy hyæna being on the ground. This I would not fire at, thinking I might still have obtained a shot at the lions, but I was unfortunately disappointed.

On the rock above this station baboons held their sway. There must have been a great many of them, judging by the noise they made in the evening and early morning. I went up early one morning to a rocky plateau close to this big rock and saw the stones that these apes had turned over in their efforts to find something edible. Some of the slabs I turned myself to test the weight, which took quite an effort on my part to perform. I was returning to breakfast shortly after this, passing close to a part of the large rock by a path that led to the house, when I saw one of these apes looking at me about twenty yards off. I put up my rifle, pretending to shoot, and he at once ducked out of sight as though he knew the use of fire-arms. I

Return to Fontesvilla

need hardly say that I had no intention of really firing at the poor brute. I think that these particular monkeys had been subjected to a fusillade from time to time by those people who had stayed at this wayside house, and were therefore painfully conscious of the effect of rifle fire. I have heard from residents in this country that these baboons will attack a man if any of their number are molested. I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement, for I never even shot at one—they looked so human, but I can quite imagine that a man would have no chance whatever if he were set upon by an angry crowd of these apes, and would be torn to shreds in next to no time. I have passed quite close to them often, but they have not offered to molest me in any way, so perhaps I was, after all, the subject for chaff.

The next day after my failure to get a shot at lions I went to Chimoio, intending to take the train back to Fontesvilla. I had worn large holes in my pair of veldt schoon. These are soft-tanned and easy-fitting Dutch boots. I was just going to throw them away, but catching sight of Cooe's grinning face, tossed them to him, thinking he might like to try them on. He was hugely delighted, promptly putting them on his feet, and commenced swaggering about in front of the house, to the envy and admiration of his less fortunate companions.

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The boys having taken up their loads, we started on the road for Chimoio. The way was sandy, and the walking very bad. I noticed that my friend Cooe did not proceed after a few miles with his usual jaunty step. The reason was soon clear, for he sat down on the roadside and took off his once-prized boots, tying the laces together and hanging them round his neck. I laughed at him when he caught us up. He must have suffered a great deal from his love of vanity, for there were two large blisters on his heels—of course owing to his feet being unaccustomed to such an encumbrance. I amused myself on the march with this man by trying to teach him to count up to ten in English. For this purpose I held ten pieces of stick in one hand, counting them out slowly and aloud, he repeating it after me. However, the effort was not entirely a success, for he would jump from six to eight in the most uncompromising way, and then back to three perhaps, but it helped to while away the time on the road.

At Chimoio I hired a truck to take my boys to Fontesvilla. They had never seen a train before in their lives, and it was most amusing to watch their faces and hear their exclamations, but what they said I was altogether unable to follow. Early one morning, therefore, I saw them safely stowed away in this open conveyance, the train

Guinea-fowl

starting for the lowlands. There was in this truck a large tarpaulin, which was usually employed in covering up merchandise of sorts. I have, I think, mentioned previously that the engines on this line burnt wood for fuel. Now, wood throws up a great number of sparks when steam is turned on to the furnaces, with the result that live embers fall around in the most promiscuous fashion. My boys found this out to their cost, for their bare skins were soon tickled up in many places by these particles of ashes. The antics that followed beat description. I happened to look out of the carriage in which I was a passenger, but could see nothing of my followers. I noticed, however, that the tarpaulin was stretched over one end of the truck. At the next stopping-place I went back to see how they were getting on, and found them huddled up like herrings in a barrel under this shelter. Large holes had been burnt in many places in the cover, and it was small wonder that they had used what protection there was to hand. The heat in my carriage was great enough to be uncomfortable, but what must it have been under that tarpaulin? At the eighty-mile peg I got on the engine with the driver. He had an old twelve-bore fowling-piece with him in the cab. The train at no time travelled at more than twenty miles an hour, and I had noticed a lot of guinea-fowl running along the track in

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front of the train at various times. I now borrowed this man's gun, and seating myself on the foot-plate in front of the engine, managed to get a shot into a lot of these birds as they ran in front of me. Altogether I picked up seven, which I shared with the owner of the gun. When we arrived at the thirty-mile peg (or thirty miles from Fontesvilla) I saw a herd of sassaby feeding quite unconcernedly within sixty yards of the track, and the driver of the train considerably pulled up for me to have a shot. I hit a nice bull hard, but it got into a large belt of reeds, from whence I was unable to dislodge him, this, too, although I had my boys out to help me in the search. The train had to go on, and I very reluctantly left a wounded beast. I hated to think of its dying miserably from my want of skill, for I should without doubt have dropped him in his tracks. I had one more shot from the train a little farther on. This was at a waterbuck bull. The shot this time proved more successful, and my boys brought the beast to the train, putting it bodily into the truck with them. I set Cooe on to taking off the head and neck-skin, and on arriving at Fontesvilla divided up the meat with the various officials of the train and station, who were delighted to get it. I put my boys up in an old hut, seeing that they were provided with the necessary food and blankets. I was wise, for

The Dingi-Dingi

once, in bringing these boys all the way from Salisbury, for at this time it was next to impossible to get bearers locally. I was, in consequence, independent of the local supply. Besides that, these boys of mine were strangers to the country and would be more likely to stick to their job without complaint, not that there was any ground for discontent, as I took particular care to see that they were provided with everything that could be reasonably demanded for their comfort. I found my West Coast boy awaiting me. During my absence up-country he had been getting extra pay by taking on the job of cook at the hotel, and was earning very good money at it. After a day or so I thought he seemed to be more than a little independent, but when I found him using my vests and silk handkerchiefs for his own adornment, my wrath was aroused, and I am afraid I smacked his head for his impudence. This punishment was useless—I might have stroked his head, for all he seemed to mind. He grinned as though he were highly amused, so I fined him ten shillings—a month's pay—which I afterwards remitted.

I had engaged a Dane named Weddell to accompany me on a hunting trip to the Dingi-Dingi. This place is some thirty miles north of Fontesvilla. After a day or so employed in buying the necessary stores we made a start to

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Massikessi. Here we found three empty huts belonging to some natives ; one I annexed for the use of Weddell and self, the others I gave over to my boys. It was quite a business to get my hut even decently clean enough to sleep in. I turned some boys on to sweeping and generally furbishing up the place, the result being better than I anticipated. I spent but one night here, being anxious to get on to the country where I understood buffalo were to be found. Accordingly, early next morning we made a start, making a line to intercept the River Pungwe, some ten miles away as we walked, but which by following the river would have been more like fifteen miles. We passed a dried-up water-hole on the way. In this place there grew most lovely water-lilies of a deep mauve colour. Some of the seed-pods were more than half ripe, so I picked a few to put in my pocket, hoping that I might on my return to England get some seedling plants. This, however, I failed to do, possibly because the pods were picked before they were ripe enough. I had collected quite a nice lot of flowering plants in my wanderings since leaving Salisbury, planting them in old tins, then putting them in scoff (food) boxes, which I made two of my boys especially responsible for. They carried them on their heads for some hundreds of miles. I eventually brought them to England. Some did fairly well, but an English gardener is often-



WEDDELL AND SOME OF MY BOYS



The Dingi-Dingi

times very pig-headed. In this case my man put them in too hot a house, with the result that he killed a good many of my best plants.

We arrived late in the afternoon at a ford, where we were to cross the river. Here the water was, in some places, up to our middle. It is rather a creepy business wading a stream when you are perfectly aware that the place swarms with crocodiles. The river at this place was quite one hundred yards broad, the stream, too, was strong. I went second, Cooe leading the way, Weddell bringing up the rear, and we landed on a sand-spit. Here the ground was literally ploughed up with the spoor of a big herd of buffalo—they had evidently made a yard of the place.

The river banks were densely fringed with tall reeds and grass, but at a short distance there was an excellent site for my camp, and it did not take long to clear away the grass and pitch our tents.

That evening before we turned in Weddell told me the following story. He had been hunting in this place the previous year, and on one occasion passed close to a tree which grew among some tall reeds. Whilst passing he was amazed to see a lioness jump out of the branches and then disappear in the grass. Now, I thought that I could swallow a lot, but doubted my capacity to digest this piece of information.

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I suppose I showed my incredulity in my face, for Weddell at once said, "You wait until to-morrow, and I will take you to the very tree, and you will probably be able to verify this thing for yourself." I looked forward, therefore, to the morning. An early start with a walk of perhaps a mile brought us to a sandy cutting through two heavily reeded patches of country. "There is the tree I was telling you about last night," my guide said, and he and I went up to it. There was plenty of fresh lion spoor in the sand. We continually came upon fresh pugs, so that it was evident that lions were fairly numerous in this place. Arrived under the tree, I found a small space denuded of reeds, what grass there was had been trodden and trampled level with the ground. I now proceeded to examine the tree, and found, surely enough, that there were any quantity of claw-marks up the bole of it, which had a distinct tendency to be out of perpendicular, in fact, it had quite a cant to one side. My curiosity was now thoroughly aroused, so I laid down my rifle and proceeded to climb into the branches, which was a comparatively easy thing to do. Here there was no mistaking the evidence that some animals were in the habit of lying out on one particular branch of the tree, for it was deeply scored throughout its length by claw-marks. I cannot say that I saw a lion or lioness jump down from the tree, but

Lions

I am convinced that Weddell had seen such a thing. He also told me that at the same time as he saw this happen he was walking about one day looking for buffalo. In an opening or glade he suddenly came unexpectedly on thirteen lions and lionesses all together. I asked him what he did, and he said, "I gave 'em best, and got out of it as soon as I could without shooting at them."

Now, of all animals the lion was the beast I wanted more than any other to bag. It is, after all, a matter of chance whether you come upon them. For you may be in a district that fairly swarms with them, and not have the luck to even see one, let alone get a shot. On the other hand, you may go out and get two or three in one day, as happened to a man who tended the bar at the hotel at Fontesvilla. He shot three on one occasion with one bullet each, and hit them all in the head, killing them instantly.

After inspecting the lion tree I told Weddell that I had never heard of such a thing before. Moreover, I thought that any man who had been in the habit of hunting lions would laugh the idea to scorn.

He said, "Yes, that may be so, but seeing is believing."

We now proceeded up a glade, or flat marsh, bordered on one side with heavy reeds, and on the other by bush and timber. We had

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gone three-parts of the way up this place seeing nothing to shoot except a bushbuck, at which I did not fire, lest I should scare any other game, when Weddell pointed to a black mass at the farther end of the marsh "The big herd of buffalo I told you about," he said. The wind was blowing across our front, the buffalo feeding up-wind, as is their habit. We disappeared in the long grass in the twinkling of an eye, and hurried at our best pace to intercept the herd. In these days when the large herds of these grand beasts have been almost exterminated by rinderpest, such a sight as met my eyes a few minutes afterwards was one that probably will never again be seen, for there must have been at least two thousand animals in a mass. They tailed out ten or twenty deep, feeding up alongside the high grass, and extending as far as I could see. The place was literally black with them, and they were feeding slowly in our direction. Here we were hidden securely, and if lucky enough to escape being winded, the herd was bound to pass within thirty yards of our shelter. Both Weddell and I had a '577 Double Magnum Express rifle loaded with a solid hardened bullet. One lives a lifetime in the minutes that pass under such circumstances—the excitement, to one who has never shot such a beast, becomes almost painful. At length the leaders were abreast of me, headed

Buffalo

by a grand old bull. Weddell whispered to me to fire first, he would look after himself, so, aiming at the centre of the shoulder, I pulled the trigger. Thump went the heavy bullet into the beast as the herd rushed in one confused mass away from the grass. The bull I hit gave a half-bellow, half-groan, when Weddell said, "That one is mortally hit." I hit another bull hard with my left-hand barrel, but did not hear him groan. I doubt if I could have distinguished it then in the general noise and confusion. The herd had now galloped into the open, the bulls in front and in the rear, the cows and calves in the centre. They went but three or four hundred yards before they halted in a bunch—and such a bunch! "Come on!" said Weddell, and we ran out into the open after the herd, getting within one hundred yards. I knelt down and hit two more bulls. One groaned loudly and dropped to the shot, the other was swallowed up in the herd.

Now they took fright in earnest. Never shall I forget the pandemonium that followed, for they went crashing through a belt of high reeds, which were laid as flat as though hundreds of steam-rollers had passed over them. The excitement had been so intense that I had quite overlooked Weddell, and what execution he had effected. "I have got two bulls, I believe, and hit three more," he said. My first bull I found

Buffalo

what difficult and nasty job. The hole in the skull being held up-stream, the water forces the portions of brain out as it is mashed up with a short stick. After the skins had been well rubbed with alum and saltpetre, the thick lips were sliced in order to let the preservative enter the skin more freely. Chancing to go to the river, I found some of my boys there also, indulging in a wash. Instead of soap they used a concave piece of burnt or charred wood, with which to scrub their skins. I threw Cooe a lump of yellow soap, which pleased him immensely, and in a few minutes he was a white nigger externally. The selfish rascal would not give a bit of it to any of the other boys, so I doled them out a bar of yellow soap between them on my return to camp, an attention which cost little, but which was most highly appreciated !

That night lions were roaring all round us, and quite close, too close, in my opinion, to be pleasant. Weddell and I had just turned in when some large animal must have run up against one of the long guy ropes that were fastened to the ridge and end-poles, shaking the tent violently. "That's a lion!" said Weddell; but on the other hand it might have been a hyæna. It is incidents such as these that make life stirring. These men who live among such happenings take things as a matter of course; they are so used to such episodes that familiarity

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seems to breed contempt! I can vouch for my own feelings, however, and can swear there was little or no contempt in my mind, but I will confess to a certain degree of "funk." Somehow the darkness and inability to take active steps or to do things get on one's nerves most. It is the waiting about, the enforced inactivity that is so trying. I had noticed the same feelings in many ways, for instance, in driving a strange team of horses. Before I got on the box and started the team, I would shake like a leaf, and be unable to speak with comfort, but directly I had them going, then they might smash up the whole concern, and I do not think I should have lost my nerve. I have felt the same feelings too in bicycle racing, going to a dentist to have a tooth drawn, etc. I wonder if this is funk? To my mind it is perilously near it, but at the same time one is quite unable to alter one's temperament. The more phlegmatic a person is, the less he is able to enjoy various sensations, whilst for those who are, so to speak, "on wires," the exact reverse seems to me to be the case.

I have digressed from my shooting, though. Notwithstanding the lions' roaring I soon dropped off to sleep, not waking until Tom, the cook, came to call us when the sun had been up for some time. We had a cup of coffee each, and then started off to look for some sport. In a

Warthogs

boggy piece of ground, a mile or so from camp, we came upon fresh elephant spoor—probably not more than a day old. It is more than likely that we had frightened the small herd from the vicinity by our attack on the buffalo. There were seven or eight elephants in this lot; one must have been a huge brute, as his tracks were enormous, being deeply imprinted in the clayey soil. Weddell and I followed up this spoor for six or seven hours, hoping against hope that they might rest for a time, and that we should eventually come up with them. We were, however, doomed to disappointment, for although we passed some palm trees on whose fruit they had made a meal, chewing the nuts and leaving the fibre on the ground, which seemed fairly fresh, yet the spoor led us into an almost impenetrable jungle, through which we had great difficulty in moving, so that as the day was drawing on, we were reluctantly compelled to give up the chase and return to camp. On the way back I came upon a sow warthog with a litter of young pigs by her side. As we wanted some meat, the buffalo bull meat being extraordinarily tough, and only fit for niggers, I shot her. Cooe and the rest of the boys knobkerried the small porkers until I rushed in and saved the life of one of them. I tried to tie him up, but somewhat unsuccessfully, giving him to Cooe to carry. In this way we at last got back

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very tired, but having had a delightful day, although not very productive.

I did not know what to do with my pig, but at last hit on the idea of putting him under the box in which we carried our cooking utensils. I made up some oatmeal and condensed milk in a large flat tin, then put this under the box so that he might eat it if he felt so inclined. The next morning the tin was emptied of every particle of food. He was a tiny beast: though he bit my thumb somewhat sharply, I do not think it was done intentionally, but rather because I happened to hold him awkwardly. His teeth were set at every angle in his jaws, and might have been thrown at his mouth. I wanted to give him plenty of air and exercise, so to this end I took a piece of canvas similar to that of which the Edginton tent was made, then set to work to make a pair of breeches to fit his fore-legs. After considerable trouble I made what I considered a splendid job of the thing. I took the pig up and fitted on his trousers, sewing them together with the strongest double thread over his withers. As they were too long, I had a piece over. To this I sewed on a piece of light but strong cord six feet long. Now the fun began, for as soon as I put him on the ground, he started off at lightning speed, only to be brought up with a round turn as the rope grew taut. I then fastened him up to the tent pole, thinking he

Warthogs

would soon tire himself out. Not a bit of it! His trousers tired first, for the stitching gave out, and with a squeal of satisfaction he tried to clear off. I was there, though, to catch him, and fastened him more securely than ever. I put some more food for him at night when the tent flaps were shut, and left him alone. In a day or so he was quite friendly, such an ugly little rascal, and I hoped I might eventually take him home with me, but Tom, in whose care I left him one day when I went away from this main camp to spend a night out, thought he would be wise by making him a green reed cage. I was furious with him on my return, to find that he had disobeyed orders, and had put the pig in this rotten cage, with the result that he had chewed through two of the bars and had got clean away, for we never saw him again. I am afraid some prowling beast of prey must have annexed him for a meal, for he was too small to take care of, or to fend for, himself.

CHAPTER IX

A Buffalo wounded by Lions—Hippopotamus—Guinea-fowl—Palm-wine—Lichtenstein Hartebeest—Vultures and Adjutant Bird—Warthog—Canoe Boy Bitten by Lion—Hippopotamus attacks empty Railway-trucks—Durban—Stander-ton—Johannesburg.

Those hardy days flew cheerily,
And when they now fall drearily,
My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main
And bear my spirit back again,
A wild bird and a wanderer.—BYRON.

I LEFT permanent camp for three or four days in order to hunt farther afield. To this end I took only a very small cotton tent for Weddell and myself, just sufficient to keep the night dew or a shower from us. The place we went to was situated on the banks of a lagoon where Weddell said there was hippopotamus. On our way I noticed a lovely white flower, in shape very similar to one of the new white clematis. It was evidently a climbing plant, as the flowers showed over the tops of some reeds, which in this place were eight feet high at least. I was determined to get the root of this flower if possible, tracing it down the stalk of a reed to the ground and then for a space of at least ten feet before I found from whence

A Buffalo wounded by Lions

it sprang. I then managed to dig out a large root with my hunting-knife, planting it in due course in a tin. I eventually brought it safely to England, where it flourished exceedingly in a moderately warm greenhouse, but I could never get it to flower, which was disappointing.

We left our boys to fix up camp on arrival at the lagoon, taking only our gun-bearers with us. Shortly we came to a small open oasis that may have been one hundred and fifty acres in extent. It was completely surrounded with the tall reeds so common in this country. In the centre of this place was a mound; it could scarcely be termed a hillock, for it was of no size. Close to this I saw something black on the ground, with some small birds alighting upon and around this object. I said to Weddell, "Isn't that a buffalo?"; but he seemed to think not, for he said, "No, it is a log." After a look through my glasses I could have sworn I saw an ear move, so together we went out to investigate. We soon discovered that this was a buffalo lying on his side. Thinking that it may have been one we had shot at some days since, we naturally thought the beast was dead, and accordingly did not take as much care and circumspection in approaching what we thought was a carcass as we might have done had we judged it to be alive. When we had approached within one hundred yards we saw that not only was it a buffalo bull, and

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a huge one at that, but that he was very much alive. He heard us coming, turning his head over his shoulder to look at us. This was quite a different proposition from a dead beast, for a wounded buffalo is one of the most dangerous animals a hunter can possibly face. It has a trick of disappearing in dense cover, then returning on its tracks to lie in wait for its pursuers. The position can then be very easily reversed, the hunter becoming the hunted. Many men have been killed by buffalo in this way; they are therefore to be approached with due deference. The mound aforesaid chancing to be between the beast and ourselves, we promptly mounted it. Now he got up on his legs, looking uncommonly nasty. "Look out!" exclaimed Weddell; "he's coming." At this time we were within thirty yards of him, and just as he started I fired with my .577 Express, hitting him hard on the point of the shoulder. This shook him, but as he still came on I gave him the other barrel, which settled the matter, and he sank wearily on to his knees. Weddell then fired a shot at him to settle matters, as he still moved, and this finished him. On going up to inspect the head, which was quite an excellent one, we discovered that this was not one of the bulls I had wounded, but that he had been sorely cut up and wounded by lions. He had a long and terribly deep gash in his off shoulder, which

A Buffalo wounded by Lions

extended from opposite to the elbow of his fore leg to the top of his withers. This gash was festering and suppurating badly—in fact, it was full of maggots. The birds we had seen fly from the stricken beast had, in all probability, been feeding on them. In addition to this sore, the buffalo had his face badly cut by the lion's claws. The gash here went to the bone and extended from just above the nose to the base of his horns. In addition to these wounds his flanks were badly cut up and scored—I think probably by half or three-parts grown cubs. No wonder the poor brute was sick and morose; he must have been in dreadful pain, and it was a work of charity to put him out of his misery. The way this beast had been attacked gave me a very graphic idea of the manner in which lions destroy a powerful animal like a buffalo. I should say the mode of procedure had been somewhat as follows. The lion, or lioness, jumps at the prey in the neighbourhood of the shoulder, holding on with the claws to the opposite side; with the claws of the other front leg it seizes the nose of the prey, which it pulls towards itself, keeping its own hind feet on the ground during the struggle. It stands to reason when the beast's neck is bent much to one side that not only can they not see where they are going, but that in a rough boggy country such as this may be it is only a question of a few

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minutes before a stumble or fall ensues, which in all probability breaks the victim's neck. The weight of a buffalo bull being enormous, a fall such as I have endeavoured to describe would more than likely prove fatal. The lion, therefore, cannot be rightly described as having the power to break the neck of such an animal, but rather, by its mode of attack, to cause its victim to destroy itself.

After taking off this bull's head and neck-skin, I sent it back to my permanent camp, and told one of my boys to see about skinning it out, which he was now quite able to do, and although I was not there to supervise this operation, he made quite a creditable job of it.

On returning in the evening to my temporary camp, I went for a stroll up the banks of the lagoon to try for a shot at a hippo. Cooe carried my .577, and I the double .303. At the far end of this lagoon at a bend, and a mile or more from camp, I saw the ugly head of an old hippopotamus in the water, another one being a little farther away. He was only about thirty yards from me, the lagoon being not wider in this place than sixty yards. His ugly little eyes and snout only showed on the surface, his head being turned three-quarters towards me. I therefore put into my rifle two solid nickel-cased bullets, and aiming just under the eye that was nearest to me, pulled the trigger. The bullet hit



HIPPOPOTAMUS LAGOON

Guinea-fowl

him evidently in the desired spot; it was, in any case, a clean miss or deadly shot, the mark being so small a one that the former might easily have been the case. However, a great splash followed the report, and the hippo disappeared beneath the surface. That is what I understood might take place, for I knew that if I killed one of these animals, the body would sink, and not rise to the surface for three hours or more, in which time the carcass would have been more or less distended with gas. It was useless to wait for this to happen. I therefore returned to camp for supper, the afternoon drawing to a close. Near the tent I heard guinea-fowl that had gone to roost in a tree. I took my twelve-bore Paradox shot-gun, which is a useful enough weapon as it fires shot well and a ball excellently straight up to a hundred yards, and proceeded to get some fresh meat for the larder. I had only one shot at several that were perched on the limb of a tree, managing to kill three, which I brought in and handed over to Tom, my cook boy, who made a most excellent salmis of the carcasses. One bird he left for the morrow, when I found that it was impossible to eat it, the flesh having become objectionably high in that short time.

At this place where I was camped there was a ford used by animals to cross the lagoon. Soon after dark the most unearthly roars proceeded

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from the vicinity of the water. Weddell told me that it was a hippo—the mate of the one I had shot, who was calling for him. The sound was immense, and no wonder, when one recalls what a cavernous gap of a mouth and throat the noise emanates from. Anyhow, the beast kept up the music for the greater part of the night, making things hideous and preventing my sleeping. In connexion with this animal, Weddell told me he believed that they were monogamous, pairing for life, until one was killed. I do not know what truth there is in this, but quote his dictum for what it is worth.

Early next morning I took some boys and proceeded to the spot where I had shot at my hippo the previous evening, but not a sign of it could we find, although we searched the banks for many hundreds of yards, which were more or less bare, and could not have provided cover for so large a beast had it been floating near them. I was naturally vexed, for I had not killed one of these monsters before, and I wanted to take off the head as a trophy. That I hit him mortally, I am convinced, and that he did not rise to the surface anywhere within the hundred yards on either side of us, I am also sure of, for I remained on the spot for quite thirty minutes before I decided to return to camp. What became of him is a mystery, for I never found,

Guinea-fowl

during the few days we remained at this place, the slightest sign of him !

The hide of a hippopotamus on the back is extraordinarily thick, at least two inches. A slab of it when thoroughly dried makes an excellent table-top ; it is sand-papered and French polished, becoming then transparent in places. It is usual to cover the hide when used for this purpose with a piece of plate glass, which prevents any liquid which might be spilt on the table from raising the polish and making sticky the raw skin beneath. Sjangbok, which is the Dutch name for narrow strips of this beast's hide, are made as follows : pieces are cut longitudinally down the back about three inches wide, and the whole length of the beast. When a sufficient number have been cut, they are suspended to the limb of a tree, a stone or heavy weight being affixed at the other end, and they are then allowed to dry naturally in the shade. After the Boer War a great many hippopotamus-hide walking-sticks were to be seen in London. These are easily made from the square pieces by whittling them down to the desired shape and thickness with a sharp knife. The edge of a piece of broken glass is then used to scrape them smooth, when they can be sand-papered and polished. Some makers insert a steel rod up the centre of the stick, which keeps it straight, a necessity perhaps, for it is too

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supple and easily bent to be of any real use as a walking-stick. The Dutchmen use pieces of this hide for whips, bruising with a stone the last two or three inches of the whip, which breaks down the fibre. The teeth of the hippo were formerly in great demand for making small articles of ivory, for it is extremely hard. The two tushes of a big bull are shaped very much like a boar's tusks, and when mounted make quite a handsome arch, on which a small gong or similar ornament may be hung. These tushes are often very discoloured when freshly taken from the beast's jaws. They may be cleaned and made much whiter by rubbing them vigorously with diluted hydrochloric acid.

Buck and game generally were scarce in this immediate vicinity, so I took my Paradox shotgun and went to a marsh where I had flushed some snipe a day or so previously. Here I got two couples of snipe, two Egyptian geese, whose skins I saved, as I wanted them for winging artificial mayflies, and two spur-winged geese. These latter were fine birds, one of them giving my boys a great hunt before they got him, as the tip of his wing only was broken. The snipe we ate, but my cook made a mistake in that he "drew" them, so we might as well have been eating sparrows for all the taste they had. When returning to camp I passed a lot of palm trees whose tops had been cut off completely.



NATIVE COLLECTING PALM WINE



CAPS ON PALM TREES TO PREVENT THE SUN DRYING UP THE SAP

Palm-wine

They were provided with conical caps of woven grass to protect them from the rays of the sun ; beneath this cap a leaf had been cut off short to the bole, which left a primitive sort of spout, down which trickled slowly the sap of the palm, which was caught in a small calabash hung beneath for that purpose. The natives visit these trees in the morning, collecting the sap that has accumulated during the night from the various gourds. They cut off from the top of the tree with a sharp knife the thinnest possible slice. This permits the sap to flow the more easily, and removes that portion which may have become more or less withered and dried up owing to the heat. After a short time the tree gives no more juice, and dies from the treatment received. This palm-wine is largely drunk by the natives. When fresh I liked it immensely, and it is very refreshing, but when it has been kept for a day or so it becomes more or less fermented and sour. I found then that a little of it went some way, for it was apt to get into one's head.

I proposed returning to my main camp on the morrow, but that night lions were so numerous, and came so close to my tent, roaring and disturbing us generally, that I decided to have one more day here. I had visited daily the different buffalo carcasses we had killed a week previously ; this, too, at dawn on most days,

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with the hope that I should surprise lions making a meal of one of them. I had purposely come away from my main camp so that I should be nearer and able to visit the kills more regularly, I regret to say without success. The carcasses got more highly scented daily, until I really could not face them any longer. We, of course, had to come up-wind to them, consequently getting the whole force of the smell.

Early on the last morning at the lagoons I had the camp struck after we had left, meaning not to return to this place, but to rejoin the permanent camp. We had nearly reached the place where our first dead buffalo lay when I saw a lion galloping as hard as he could travel down the centre of an open spot. He was at least three hundred yards away, so that a shot was out of the question. I had therefore the mortification of seeing him disappear into some reeds in the distance. This was the only lion I saw quite in the open, and although I spent the early mornings looking solely for them, I never got even a shot at one, which only goes to prove that in a more or less densely covered reed country the words "chance" and "luck" have an important bearing on the result of one's labours. I should, were I to have the good fortune to revisit this part of Africa, take with me from Durban a pack of dogs. I think that then success might be assured, the only drawback to the scheme being that the tsetse fly

Lichtenstein Hartebeest

is quite common in this neighbourhood, and the dogs would probably have succumbed to their bites in a short time.

From the main camp I still visited the buffalo kills, when I could summon up strength of mind to face the stench, which was the more trying as it was necessary to do so before breakfast and on an empty stomach.

I went out one day to a big open flat, where I found seven Lichtenstein hartebeest, and leaving Cooe with the .577, I stalked this herd. With my glasses I spotted a good bull, which was a little beyond the rest. The cover in this place was almost nil: a few stunted bushes and a white-ant hill or two. They were some three hundred yards away from us when I started my crawl, but by lying flat and crawling with the greatest care I managed to reach an ant-hill, which enabled me to get a hundred yards nearer, where I took a rest. The grass had been burnt off the country a short time previously, the young and new grass on which the game was feeding coming up thickly on the burnt parts.

The perspiration streamed down my face, my hands and knees were sore and bleeding from contact with the short stubs of the burnt grass, and I was, moreover, as black as a sweep. After a few minutes' rest I cautiously peeped round the foot of the ant-hill, and to my delight

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saw that I had not been observed. I therefore made for a small bush that was some sixty yards ahead of me. This was the dangerous part of that stalk, for during this distance I was completely in the open. Whilst the herd fed I painfully crawled by inches towards them—at the slightest symptom of a head being raised, I lay prone as though I were a log. Then after what seemed an age I reached the bush. Here I still had to be extremely careful. I was frightfully blown and hot, and scarcely dared breathe; it was impossible to get any closer, for there was not enough cover between the bush and the herd to have hidden a mouse. I had therefore to take my shot from where I lay. Being still out of breath, my heart thumping wildly, partly with the exertion and partly with excitement, I felt that this state was not conducive to good shooting, so I refrained from firing until I collected myself somewhat, employing the time in pushing the rifle very carefully beyond and beneath the bush. Then taking a deep breath, I covered the centre of the bull's shoulder and pressed the trigger. At the shot he fell to the ground never to rise again, whilst the rest of the herd ran about thirty yards, then pulled up, looking straight at where I lay. I dare not put in another cartridge, for they would have seen the slightest movement. I therefore drew a bead on the chest of the nearest



HARTEBEEST
Bubalis Lichtenstein

Vultures and Adjutant Bird

to me, and fired again. The bullet went truly, hitting a cow low in the throat; she dropped at once to the shot. I then got up, Cooe, who had been in hiding, joining me. On opening the bull, I found that the bullet had penetrated both lungs, mushrooming, and remained against the skin on the other side. The cow I hit through the heart, which was somewhat of a lucky shot. The bull's horns were an excellent pair, and I was delighted with the head, for I had not killed one of these long-faced, weird-looking animals before. I cut off the heads and neck-skins and prepared to leave the spot. Cooe was carrying amongst other things my camera. I meant to send out ten or twelve boys to bring in all the meat they could carry, and to tell a local chief, whose kraal we had passed earlier in the day, that he could have what remained. When I fired the shots I did not see a vulture anywhere, but within five minutes after the bull was dead they came dropping from the clouds and apparently from nowhere, some taking stand on an old dead tree some hundreds of yards off, whilst others were on the ground in the near vicinity. After leaving the kills I retraced my steps after having gone perhaps a hundred yards, and in that short space of time both animals were black with vultures—there must have been over a hundred of them. There was, too, a huge old adjutant bird, who was getting busy on the

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bull's neck where it had been skinned out. I noticed that the vultures gave him a wide berth, which was not to be wondered at, for a blow from that pickaxe of a beak would have finished the gormandizing career of any vulture. Taking the camera, I now approached the birds, which allowed me to get within about forty yards. Then, as I felt I could get no nearer, I took a snapshot of the scene, which turned out quite a success !

I sent out the boys in due course, but they could only bring in the meat of the cow, the bull being eaten completely. I passed the spot on the following day, looking at the carcass of the bull. Nothing but skin remained. The foul birds had even entered the carcass through the neck, the skin being gone in places, which was probably the work of jackals and hyænas.

The next day Weddell and I went out together. We had a long walk, but came on but little game until the afternoon, when we saw a small herd of buffalo feeding. This lot, which consisted of perhaps fifty head, may have been a small bunch of the huge herd, of which we had seen nothing more, although we had traversed the country for miles round in every direction. These buffaloes were splendidly placed for a stalk, as there was dense cover all round and close to them, and we were enabled to get within thirty yards. I had my eight-bore Paradox

Vultures and Adjutant Bird

that Cooe was carrying. I saw a good bull, which I decided to take, leaving Weddell to look after himself. Just as I fired, a cow ranged up alongside the beast I had determined on. It was all done so quickly that I fired unintentionally, killing her dead on the spot. The bull got my left-hand barrel as he moved off, but I hit him a little too far back to be immediately fatal. He turned out of the herd, entering a patch of reeds that formed the apex of a triangle. Weddell had killed a good bull with his .577 Express, so we went up to the place where my bull had disappeared. Blood was sprinkled all over the grass and on the outside of the reeds. I was within ten yards of his hiding-place when I heard the reeds crackling, then directly afterwards out he came into the open. Now, it was any odds that he would have charged me, as I was directly in front of him, but strange to relate, he turned off at right angles, following the path that the rest of the herd had taken. I fired again at him as he turned, but made an extraordinary mess of things, for instead of hitting him as I intended, behind the shoulder, I hit him in the back of the horn by the base of his ear. Bad shot though it was, he fell as though he had been poleaxed and quite dead. On approaching him I saw what a blow the bullet had dealt. The horn where it was struck was smashed into a pulp—I could have put my fist

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into the hole the bullet had made. On cutting the beast open the boys found my first bullet embedded in the near shoulder-blade. It had gone through one lung and had made a great mess of the shoulder, which, curiously enough, was not broken. The bullet, which I still have, is flattened in at one side of its apex as though it had hit a big bone and then glanced off. I should have thought that at the short range at which I fired the shot the bullet would have gone clean through the beast, and I was disappointed at the result. The head that Weddell obtained was an extremely good one, the curves being very pretty and the depth of the frontlet enormous. I did not take off the head of the bull I had killed, as it was hopelessly spoilt by my bad shooting. I sent in the other head to camp whilst we went farther afield before returning for home.

Close to a piece of heavy bush I saw some warthogs in the open, but within fifty yards of cover. We approached them through the timber, getting at last within sixty yards of the nearest, which happened to be the boar, and a large one. Resting the rifle against the trunk of a tree, I fired at this pig, and was rewarded by seeing him roll over kicking, and in a few moments he was dead. My boys soon had his head off after I had marked with my knife the length of neck-skin I required left on the



WART HOG
Phacochoerus aethiopicus

Warthog

scalp. This is a necessity. For if a nigger be left to his own sweet devices he is apt to cut the skin off close to where the skull joins the neck vertebræ, with a result that if the trophy is to be set up on a shield, the look of it is completely spoilt. It is far better to leave on too much neck-skin—that can always be reduced when in the taxidermist's hands.

The meat of these pigs is quite excellent eating. My boys brought in the whole of the carcass, and I reserved a haunch for my own consumption. I stumbled across a very humble object on my walk back to camp—a land tortoise, and a fairly large one. I made one of the boys carry it. On my return to camp I bored with a bradawl a small hole in the tail end of his shell, put a small loop of soda-water wire into this hole, then tied a long string to the wire. I fastened him up to the pole that should have held my small warthog, but his movements were so slow and cautious that I soon afterwards put him outside of the tent and tied him to a tent peg, where he could crawl and hide himself in the long grass to his heart's content. I eventually got this animal back as far as Fontesvilla, but lost him one evening from under the hotel, where he spent most of the day, and, I suppose, night; perhaps it was as well, for a more uninteresting pet I never possessed, and it would have been a great nuisance had

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I attempted to take it with me back to England.

I had now been in this Dingi-Dingi country for three weeks. I had failed in my main object, namely, to shoot a lion, but I had obtained all the buffalo heads I required.

I had great difficulty in curing the hog's skin; the warts, of which there are four, two on each side of the face, take quite a lot of negotiating. I had to gouge out the interior of these excrescences with a penknife before I could get the preservative into them, and then it was quite on the cards the skin would go wrong. I took a lot of trouble in the drying operation, however, and managed to bring the trophy home without damage.

Weddell had made an engagement to accompany another man on a short expedition in about three days' time, so I had reluctantly to decide whether I would remain on by myself or whether I would go back with him to Fontesvilla. I eventually decided on the latter course. We therefore struck camp. I had hired a dug-out canoe from a local chief to take Weddell, myself, and Tom, my cook, back by river, sending my boys with the tents, heads, and gear by land, the way we had travelled when coming to the place. The canoe was manned by a man and a boy of about fifteen years of age. The river in places was so shallow, owing to the numerous

Warthog

sand-banks that abounded, that no craft but a canoe, which drew but an inch or so of water, would have been possible to navigate. As it was, we continually got stuck on some little spit of sand. That voyage was memorable though, for I shot two crocodiles, which sank, and for an episode which I will now relate. We had been rather late in making a start on our down-river journey, for we had to see the overland boys well on their way before we started off ourselves. It was not surprising, therefore, that darkness approached before we had completed half our voyage. It was not easy to find a decent camping-place—there was practically no wood or timber of any sort, except one large tree, which was green and therefore would not burn. We had no tents with us, having sent them overland. The banks too were very steep. If we were to get settled down before it was quite dark, we should have to hurry over selecting a place. I said to Weddell, “Why not here as well as anywhere else?” There was a small bush or tree not more than eight feet high that I observed, and that might furnish sufficient fuel to boil the kettle. We therefore moored the canoe fore and aft alongside the bank and clambered up the steep side. The grass here was quite four feet high, it had not been burnt off by the natives, so, in order to clear a space quickly, I rolled up a torch of grass, lit this, and

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then set the surrounding country on fire. This spread famously, but at a point twenty feet up-river of me I left a small tongue of grass that seemed to be damp and would not burn. Tom had, meanwhile, been coaxing the kettle to boil, there were barely enough sticks for this purpose. Our supper was a primitive affair of cold meat and bread and butter, washed down with tea. It was now quite dark, the sky being studded with millions of stars. On the opposite side of the river, which in this place was seventy yards or so wide, and close to the water, three different lions were roaring. They made so much noise that I happened to say to Weddell, "Perhaps it is as well that I lit the grass, for there are probably plenty of lions on this side also," little thinking how close some of them must have been to us at the moment. Weddell replied that he did not think there were any on our side, as they would have answered the roaring of those opposite. However, I took up the torch again, which I lit from the embers of our fire, then approached the small tongue of grass that I had failed to ignite a few minutes earlier. I did not make a job of it, though; it burnt a little, then went out suddenly. As things subsequently happened, there is no sort of doubt that when I was thus employed I was within but a few yards of a lion or lioness. The animal probably did not go for me owing to the fact that I held

Canoe Boy Bitten by Lion

the blazing torch in my right hand. We had a short smoke. Tom was already asleep with his feet towards the river; close to his head was the small canoe boy, wrapped in his blanket, but at right angles to Tom's body. Opposite to Tom, Weddell lay leaning on one arm. I was between the canoe man and the river. My rifle, the .577 Express, was loaded and lay at my right hand. Weddell also had his rifle close beside him. I was in the act of knocking out the ashes from my pipe when a lion or lioness jumped amongst us, seizing the canoe boy, who happened to be the nearest object. Both Weddell and I fired, almost simultaneously, which made the animal drop its prey. My shot was fired with one hand, and how it was that one of us was not killed is a mystery to me, for there were bodies, blankets, and legs flying in all directions during the short second whilst the pandemonium lasted. The lion had seized the poor boy by his upper arm and ribs, and he probably owed his life to the fact that, nigger-like, he had covered his head completely with his blanket. He had, though, a very deep wound on his arm and a great gash torn in his side. Luckily I had in my medicine chest, which I happened to have with me, some very excellent oils, which I used to dress the wound with. I bound up the arm with a silk handkerchief after washing the wound out thoroughly with an antiseptic, then treated the



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ribs to a similar dressing, using a bandage to keep the lint in place. The boy was, luckily, more frightened than hurt, but he had had a very near shave, and I congratulated my lucky stars too that I had not been the one to be taken when lighting up the grass. I thought now it was about time to make for the canoe, for it would have been quite impossible to get any sleep after what had occurred on the bank, so we literally "took up our beds and walked." The canoe was very narrow and cramped, but there was plenty of room to stretch one's legs, which is something. I lay awake for two hours with my rifle on the gunwale, hoping that the lions might again come and investigate us, for this time I might have had a good shot at one, as they would have been silhouetted against the sky, and a miss would have been almost an impossibility owing to the shortness of the range, which could not have been over twenty feet, if so far. We were not molested further that night, and I slept the sleep of the weary when I was tired of watching for a shot. Weddell seemed to think that we had been attacked by a lioness. It may have been so—I believe a lioness is more daring than a lion—but the night was so dark that I could not tell what the sex was, I only saw the outline of the beast and then let drive at it. On thinking the matter over next morning I was at a loss to understand why my fingers

Hippopotamus

had not been bruised and cut when firing a heavy rifle like a .577 with one hand. I should not care to do the same again in cold blood—the rifle recoils quite enough when used against the shoulder and when held with both hands. The next morning I went up to see if we had hit the lion, or if any blood spoor was to be found, but could find nothing. It struck me, though, as more wonderful than ever how any beast could have come up through the grass and thus avoided the fire. It may have come along the bank of the river, but even there the grass was burnt to within a foot of the edge. There remained only the narrow tongue I have mentioned, and when I looked at the place by daylight I decided that that must have been the means of approach.

We all had breakfast close by, but a little lower down-river from the scene of last night's adventure. I dressed the boy's arm and side again, and was relieved to see that they looked healthy, and not in the least inflamed round the edges. He had slept well, too, he told Weddell, which was a marvel.

We resumed our voyage after breakfast, arriving at Fontesvilla without further mishap. An event had happened on the previous night here, too, which had thrown this small place into a state of excitement. A hippo had wandered from the river below the town and passed several houses until he came to the railway

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station. Here his progress was for a moment barred by a fence which consisted of six or seven strands of barbed wire, but he had treated it as so much cotton, and had evidently charged the obstruction, breaking two strands and bending the upright posts. He had left his mark on the barbs of the wire in the shape of mud and blood. This hurt had upset his equanimity, for he had walked up the small bank that bordered the railway track and then up the line until he came to a siding where were three miniature open trucks, the end of which he charged, smashing that part into matchwood. In this effort he had broken off a splinter from one of his tusks, which I picked up when I appeared on the scene shortly afterwards. He had amused himself by chewing portions of the woodwork into a pulp, leaving it in that state scattered around amongst the débris. He seems, after this escapade, to have slid down the steep embankment that was here, and rejoined the river farther up-stream.

As an Austrian friend of mine, Count Coudenhove, was returning to Beira in a few days' time, we decided to go together. I paid off my boys, gave them the greater part of my outfit, and sent them back to Salisbury. I offered to get them a ride in an empty truck as far as Chimoio, but they seemed to prefer the walk, having no doubt a lively recollection of the way the sparks from the engine had afflicted them on their way

Hippopotamus

down the line. I was likely to have some difficulty with my cook, Tom, whom, in the ordinary way, I meant to send back to the West Coast on my return to Cape Town, but as he was offered, and accepted, the post of cook at the Fontesvilla Hotel, I was unwilling to stand in the way of his making good money, so I left him there, and have no doubt that he gave every satisfaction. He should have been able to save quite a nice little sum if he were careful, enough to start him in a small way on his return to his own country.

On our way down-river the steamer stuck on a sand-bank, and as the tide was still falling, it meant a wait of three or four hours before she would again be afloat. Coudenhove and I therefore took a boat and some boys as crew, proceeding up a small tributary. On our return an hour or so later, when almost within sight of the steamer, our small boat got aground. Do what we would we could not get her off into the channel, so there was nothing to do but wait for the turn of the tide with the best grace possible. We had been here only a short time when a hippopotamus appeared out of the river a hundred yards off, and casually remained in full view standing on one of the sand-banks. My rifles were all packed up, so I took Coudenhove's .577 and fired at the beast's shoulder. Now, this rifle was built on a particular pattern

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to suit the owner, one of the features being a distortion of the trigger guard. I was not prepared for what happened. Both barrels went off simultaneously, and the hammers hit me over the right eyebrow, cutting my face painfully, whilst the hippo disappeared like a flash into deep water.

I spent a week in Durban, and then went up to Johannesburg. In those days the railway only went as far as Standerton, the journey being made thence to the mining town by coach. As those days have long since passed, it may be of interest if I publish a snapshot of the coach and one of the teams. It was a most enjoyable drive, the teams being changed often, and the journey made more often than not at a gallop. A nigger held the ribbons, whilst the whip was manipulated by a white man. After a week spent in Johannesburg, I returned to Cape Town, thence to England, where I arrived after being away from home just over twelve months.



THE STANDERTON-JOHANNESBURG COACH

CHAPTER X

Spitzbergen—Finner Whales—A Sealing Crew's Fate—Reindeer—Belugas or White Whales—Andrée and his Balloon—Andrée's Cooking-stove—Catching Gulls—Eider-down.

Therefore a health to all that shot and miss'd.

Taming of the Shrew.

IN the spring of 1896 I was asked to accompany Sir Martin Conway to Spitzbergen, and had but three days in which to make up my mind. Eventually I decided to join the party, and make myself as useful as possible. The idea of this expedition was to explore the island, and if possible to cross from Ice Fjord to the other side.

On arriving at Trondhjem I tried to buy some small iron rat-traps to catch birds, and the search for these things was a long one. When I found what I needed I padded the jaws with tow, so that there could be no possibility of breaking the leg of anything I might be able to catch. I was very anxious to bring home with me some live specimens of the ivory gull, glaucous gull, and the different species of skua.

After leaving the North Cape the nights became shorter the farther north we went, until

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at one o'clock at night there was no appreciable difference in the light then and twelve o'clock noon.

I was asleep one night when the officer of the watch sent down word to me that we were amongst a large school of Finner whales. As I had asked to be advised if we met any, the summons was not altogether unexpected, but I wished the genus whale at the bottom of the sea when I was awakened! However, I tumbled up on deck, and was rewarded by seeing an extraordinary number of these leviathans playing about all round the steamer. There must have been hundreds of them. Could some of the whaling steamers have known of this school they would have soon taken toll of their number. As it was, I remained on the bridge watching them until we had passed, then again turned into my cosy berth.

After a fine voyage we arrived at our destination, Ice Fjord. This is one of the most frequented fjords of the island. There was a great quantity of drift-ice about that made navigation difficult. The engines were put "dead slow," for it would be no sort of joke to ram a small iceberg. Spitzbergen, "needle-pointed," is so called on account of the jagged nature of the tops of the mountains, which are serrated in many instances like the edge of a saw. In the early spring and again in autumn the drift-ice



THE TWO SURVIVORS OF THE SEALING SCHOONER

Finner Whales

enters and recedes from these various fjords according to the wind's direction. You may enter a fjord practically free from ice, and the wind may veer round, blowing strongly from an opposite direction, when the ice drifts back, completely blocking up the open water. Owing to this, especially in the late autumn, ships are particularly careful to leave before the hard frosts set in, for they may in this case be compelled to remain in this inhospitable and desolate land throughout the long Northern winter.

This had actually happened to a crew of sealers the autumn previous to our visit, in fact, our steamer was the first vessel to put in an appearance and to offer aid to these men after their terrible experience. We had observed smoke rising as it were from the ground, and so soon as the anchor was dropped and a boat lowered, some of us went ashore to investigate. We found a sealing vessel embedded in the ice close to the shore. On a flat piece of ground we discovered whence the smoke came. Then two men appeared, one a Norwegian and the other a Lapp. They were both dressed in long coats that they had made from skins of reindeer which they had killed themselves. The Norwegian, who spoke English well, told me the story of how they had been caught late the previous autumn in the ice, and why they had been obliged to remain where they were. They left their vessel,

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as they were afraid that the pressure of the ice that hemmed her in would crack her sides, and excavating a hole about five feet deep in the soil, covered it over by way of a roof with drift-wood and the mainsail of their boat. This party originally consisted of three men. The captain, who was also a Norwegian, died of that fearful scourge, scurvy. This sad event happened in midwinter, when they could no longer dig a hole in the ground owing to the fact that the frosts, which in these months touch 80° below zero, made such an operation impossible. They therefore had recourse to putting the corpse into two barrels, the legs into one and the trunk into another, nailing canvas over the place where the barrels joined, then piling drift-wood over all, to keep off polar bears and foxes. It was a melancholy task we had to perform in burying this man, his body was still frozen solid, and the ravages of the disease made him look dreadfully emaciated, but otherwise he looked as though he had died but the previous day.

In the photograph here reproduced the scene is depicted exactly as we found them. The surviving Norwegian was still suffering from scurvy, looking desperately ill. He was, however, able to walk about, although very weak. In a few days, after being well fed and cared for on board our steamer, one would not have



THE BURIAL PLACE (MARKED X) OF THE MAN WHO DIED OF SCURVY

Reindeer

recognized him as the same person. These men had killed a great many reindeer, which actually came down to the flat on which the men had their hut. The carcasses they had piled in a large heap, which can be seen in the photograph, the whole lot freezing into a solid lump. They were therefore sure of plenty of fresh meat for food, whilst the skins were used as clothing and bedding. What they suffered from was the want of vegetable or green food. Everything of this nature had been buried for months under the snow, but now that spring was again upon them the snow was melting fast, and the Alpine flowers were already beginning to show signs of life.

These reindeer must be hard put to it during the long winter to find a living. They can scrape away the snow in the sheltered valleys with their fore feet, but when the depth is great they must find it difficult to exist at all. Many of them have pieces or snicks nipped out of their ears, and I have heard this accounted for by a suggestion that the herds were owned by men who had ear-marked them in this way to distinguish their property. This idea is, to my mind, so far-fetched as to be an absurdity. No one lives on this most desolate of islands, let alone owns reindeer. The solution of the matter is obvious—namely, that these animals' ears are more often than not frost-bitten by the intense cold.

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The owners of the steamer in which we had travelled to this place were of an enterprising disposition, for they had brought with them a hotel, every board and post of which, being made of wood, was numbered. It had been already put together before they left Norway, then taken down and shipped to what was likely to be its future destination, as the most northern house in the world. All the spare hands on the steamer now set about erecting this house. In a week it was practically finished with the exception of the roof, which was made of birch bark over wooden battens and tarred felt, then finally covered with semi-green sods cut from the fast-thawing-out banks in the immediate vicinity. I do not know whether the owners of this hotel considered Spitzbergen a likely competitor to the south of France. I think they must have lost their money if that was their object, but perhaps some day the doctors who order these things may recognize the fact that Spitzbergen is probably the healthiest country in the world. It is practically impossible to catch cold there, and should a person be suffering from such a thing, I could almost guarantee a complete cure after a residence of twenty-four hours. The reasons for this may be summed up in the following way. The island is nearly a thousand miles due north of Norway, which is the nearest inhabited land. To the east, west, and north,

Reindeer

the air has to traverse hundreds of miles over the ice before arriving at this island. Then for four months in the summer the sun shines both day and night, the air is extraordinarily bright and rare, and the atmosphere so clear that the distances seen are very deceptive. I started one morning to walk to a point of land I wanted to investigate, but found that after two hours' hard work I did not seem to have made any appreciable progress towards my goal, whilst the steamer, from whence I had started, seemed close at hand. I should not be at all surprised if one day this island were to become a consumption sanatorium for the world: given that proper accommodation were provided, I feel sure that incipient cases would receive nothing but benefit from a visit. I may still live to see this, who knows?

The owners of the steamer went so far as to have made a special postage stamp in two denominations. These, of course, are but tokens, and were used as postage fees for any letters sent by the steamer to Norway, where they would require restamping. I bought a sheet or two of these stamps as curios. I, at times, have given away specimens to my children friends who collect stamps, explaining to them at the same time that they are merely curios and not a Norwegian issue.

Sir M. Conway had brought out to this place

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with him two Norwegian ponies. These had been fitted with leather shoes similar to those used in England on horses' feet when drawing a mowing-machine on our lawns, but larger in the tread, to prevent the ponies' feet from sinking in the deep snow. These ponies were for the purpose of drawing sleighs on which were packed the stores for the trip. When it came to deciding who was to accompany the expedition it was considered that with the means of transport at hand some of the party had to be left behind. (See Sir Martin Conway's book on his expedition.) Trevor Battye and I therefore remained in charge of the camp at the base, where we amused ourselves by collecting various plants, bird skins, etc. One day we discovered a small coal seam, some of which we used daily in our fireplace. It was of very poor quality, soft and very smoky, a kind of lignite, but it answered admirably for our cooking necessities. I believe since our discovery a small company was formed for the purpose of working this coal, but I am not aware with what results.

The sea-birds, such as guillemots, little auks, etc., come in millions to these islands to breed; they can be seen flying backwards and forwards throughout the day and night between the sea and their nests, often with a small fish in their mouths. Battye and I found on one occasion a pink-footed goose's nest in which were

Belugas or White Whales

four eggs. I cut out the whole sod of earth that contained the nest, as Battye wanted it for the Natural History Museum at Kensington. Unfortunately I put my big foot into the nest before we got it back to camp, which did not do the eggs any good, for I smashed one and cracked another.

One morning a school of about twenty belugas, or white whales, came into the fjord. As they were within a few feet of the land, the water here being very deep close in-shore, I went for my twelve-bore Paradox and a supply of ball cartridges. The old whales are almost white in colour, and perhaps eighteen or twenty feet in length, whilst the young ones are a deep slaty tint, and not much smaller than the old ones. The water was so clear that it was quite easy to see them as they swam beneath the surface, coming up to blow at every few yards. I aimed at their heads and, as they appeared above the surface of the water, fired. In all I had five shots, killing four whales, the fifth was mortally wounded, but turned away towards the open sea, going all along the surface like a giant torpedo, where it sank. The four sank at once to the shots, killed instantaneously. They were recovered by some Swedes with harpoons, who towed them to the shore and flayed them. The skin of these whales is used for boot-leather and is, I understand, admirable for that purpose,

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but they are killed principally for the fat, or, as the Norwegians call it, "spec," with which the carcass is literally covered, the value of one of these whales being about £2.

I soon became rather tired of the inactivity of the base camp, so took advantage of a passage in a small tug-boat that was returning to Danes Ghat, where I knew that Andrée and his balloon were established. I did not think at one time during that trip that our small steamer could possibly weather the huge seas we encountered soon after starting, and we had to take refuge for a few hours under the lee of an island to permit the weather to moderate somewhat before resuming our voyage. At length we arrived at our destination, which is situated on the 80° latitude. Here I found the whole place in a great bustle. The huge shed in which the balloon, when inflated, was to be housed was almost finished, and the apparatus for making the hydrogen gas which was to be used for inflating the balloon was also in course of construction. I had luckily brought with me my green Willesden tent, the local accommodation being completely taken up. Close to the balloon shed was a substantial wooden house. This belonged to a friend of mine, Arnold Pike, who had two or three years previously elected to winter here. It was quite comfortably provided with sleeping-bunks, and consisted of two rooms. I could not

Andrée and his Balloon

make use of it, however, as it was crammed full of Andrée's more delicate instruments, gear, etc. I therefore got some help and pitched my camp some half-mile away on the beach. This step I took for several reasons. One was that on account of the very explosive nature of hydrogen gas, the immediate neighbourhood of the balloon would have been impossible, for I could neither have had a smoke nor lighted a fire, in fact, it would have been highly dangerous to light a match in the vicinity. I therefore persuaded a friendly Swede, who was a correspondent for one of the leading Swedish newspapers, to accompany me in my desolation. I imagine that few men have lived in a tent much farther north than I did for some time. It was a desolate spot, but across the fjord was the most lovely glacier; the brilliant blue of this ice-cliff, which must have been one hundred feet high, faced the opening of my tent. If the weather was warmer than usual, huge blocks of ice were perpetually falling into the sea. Many of these must have been thousands of tons in weight, judging from their size and the wave they made after hitting the water. It is extremely dangerous to approach the face of such a glacier in a boat. For if a huge berg breaks away from the glacier in the manner described above, the swamping of the boat might easily follow. The glacier cracks, too, with reports as though a

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park of artillery were at practice in the vicinity. This is disturbing to one who is unaccustomed to the sound, but one soon gets used to it. Being in a facetious mood one morning, I carved on a piece of board with my knife the famous verse :

“O Solitude ! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face ?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.”

I then nailed it firmly to the blade of an oar, and stuck it upright in the ground, piling a large cairn of big stones round the base of the oar to prevent its being knocked down by the wind and weather. It may be there to this day, unless some wanderer has demolished my handiwork, but men who are in the habit of visiting such places would, I think, be the last persons to touch such a sign-post. They are apt to treat life somewhat seriously and would hardly be likely to destroy what might seem to them the finger-post of a possible tragedy !

I used to spend the greater part of the day with Andrée. He and I became great friends. I one day asked him if he would take me along with him on his expedition to try and find the North Pole, but he laughingly refused. “My crew must be all Swedes ; I would not take even a Norwegian.” I was not joking when I made this suggestion ; I really meant what I said, and would have

Andrée and his Balloon

accompanied him with pleasure. The man was so splendid, his enthusiasm so intense, and his preparations were and had been so completely thought out, that I agreed with him he had, with luck, a very great chance of success. As the account of the two months I spent with Andrée seemed to interest a number of men before whom I gave a long lecture soon after my return to England, at the Royal Societies Club, I shall venture to write a rather full description of it, for I do not know of any book or periodical that has hitherto referred to it.

Andrée based his theories on his ability to reach the North Pole on the assumption that he could keep his balloon inflated with hydrogen gas for at least one week; that the winds in the spring-time in these latitudes blow more or less steadily towards the Pole, namely, from the south; and that he could, by allowing a series of ropes to drag on the ice, use these as a fulcrum, and so far steer his balloon as to allow him to set a small square sail with which he had provided himself. Now, hydrogen gas is extremely hard to contain in any vessel; how much more so would this be the case in a balloon that was made of silk. This silk was fairly dense and thick, but we found that when the balloon was filled with gas she leaked badly. To overcome this, many gallons of copal varnish were used to dress the outer covering. Then there was

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the question of diffusion or a general escape of the gas through the fabric on account of the extreme difficulty of making any material comparatively gas-tight. Andrée considered that a week at the utmost should find him on terra firma once more, having crossed the Pole *en route*. He did not seem to care where he landed so long as his main object of approaching the Pole was attained. He hoped that he could land somewhere in Siberia. To this end, and for his help and protection, the Russian Government had distributed thousands of leaflets amongst the natives in this locality describing the expedition, so that he might have whatever assistance they could afford him. Andrée put it quite tersely to me one day when I guessed his probable landing-place, and said, "I shan't land, in any case, anywhere near a telegraph office." Given that the balloon kept afloat, there was the question of the direction of the wind, for, of course, the whole success or failure depended upon this factor. In the spring the prevailing winds are from the south, veering south-east, south-west. As the summer advances the winds become more easterly and westerly, until in late summer the prevailing winds become northerly, north-easterly, or north-westerly. It was therefore essential that if success was to attend his efforts a very early start in the spring must be made, to take advantage of this tendency of

Andrée and his Balloon

the winds to blow him to his desired goal. The drag-ropes were more or less of an experiment, although he had previously made a voyage in a balloon over the sea using a similar arrangement. He had provided himself with two sets of these drag-ropes. They were about the size of a steamer's hawser, made of specially twisted coir, or cocoa-nut fibre, and had been boiled in vaseline to make them stand the probable rough usage that they would be subjected to. Each set weighed about a ton, and was made up of three of these ropes, and the total length was in the neighbourhood of 150 metres. One set was stowed away above the car, and was for an emergency; the other was spread out on the ground before his start from the shed. The idea was to keep the balloon at or about one hundred metres high in the air. The drag-ropes would be all useful in this connexion, for every yard the balloon rose in the air after this height the greater the load she would be compelled to lift. On the other hand, the nearer the balloon was to the surface of the land, ice, or sea, the more rope she would have to drag, and she would be relieved of a corresponding amount of weight. There was an arrangement on the edge of the car beneath the balloon that permitted Andrée to shift the position of these ropes from one side to the other, a distance of about eighteen inches; this was effected by a ratchet. He could also,

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if he so wished it, immediately free the ropes from the car and leave them behind him. Thus in an emergency, in case, that is, the ropes fouled in a crevice in the ice or rocks, he could get rid of them. Freed from this weight the balloon would then rise to a considerable height again, when he could, should he wish, put over the side the duplicate drag-ropes he had in reserve. These ropes were so hard that a blade of a pen-knife could not penetrate them; they were, towards their extremities, provided with weak spots, like a rat's tail, that would break in case of a foul, and so free him to resume his journey. All his food, water, and stores were carried in aluminium tins. The anchor, all instruments, etc., were made of bronze—the only articles of steel that he took with him were a knife and rifle. The food and stores were carried in canvas pockets that were affixed to the ropes that led from the netting that covered the balloon and that supported the car, the total weight carried by the balloon, including passengers, being about five tons. The balloon being more or less flat on the top was provided with a cap of oiled silk; this was to prevent snow, should any fall, from becoming lodged there. The neck of the balloon was provided with a patent valve which would automatically open if the pressure of the gas, owing perhaps to the heat of the sun, became excessive, thereby preventing a burst. She was

Andrée's Cooking-stove

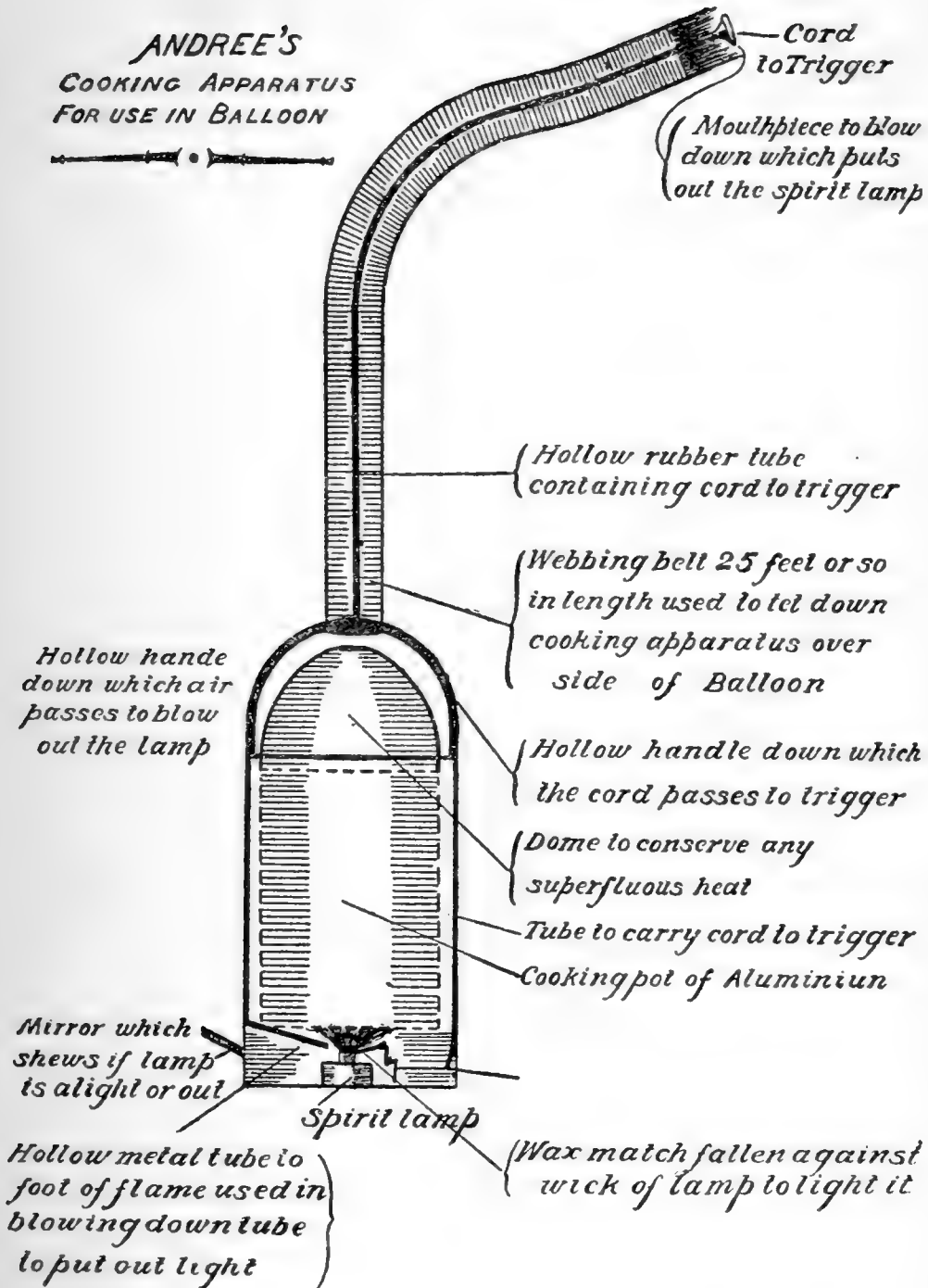
also provided with a valve placed high up in the side of the balloon, on the equator, which was operated in the usual way with a line. His cooking apparatus was ingenious, and was the invention of a friend, a Swedish engineer. He was unable to light a match in the car for fear of an explosion, so an arrangement had to be devised to overcome this difficulty.

The method of using this apparatus was as follows: the prepared food was mixed with a certain known proportion of water and placed in the pot, the spirit lamp was filled, and a wax match placed in the finger-like hammer. This hammer was made on the principle of that of a flint-lock gun, the trigger of which was pulled by the cord, which was conveyed in a pipe that was affixed to the outside of apparatus, through the handle, thence up the rubber tube to the man in the balloon. The whole apparatus was lowered after preparation below the car the length of the webbing belt, which was some twenty-five feet long, or sufficiently far away from the gas in the balloon to make the risk of an explosion a negligible quantity. Now, the different foods supplied required a certain time, which was a known quantity, for their cooking; therefore when all was ready and the match in position the whole concern was lowered to the extreme length of the webbing belt; then the cord that sprang from trigger was pulled, the hammer

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holding the match fell, striking a piece of sand-paper in its fall, which lit the match, and this again in due course lit the wick of the spirit lamp. The operator looked over the side of the car into the mirror, to see if the lamp was alight; if so, a regulated time elapsed before the given quantity of food was cooked. He then, before pulling up the apparatus, blew down the tube, which was connected with a pipe, the end of which was close to the foot of the spirit lamp flame. He could thus blow out this flame, and could see in the mirror whether or not he had succeeded in doing so. He had then only to haul up the food into the car to enjoy a hot meal. The dome was used to reserve any superfluous heat generated in the act of cooking the food, but was not an important factor in the arrangement. The apparatus showed what an amount of foresight and care had been expended on the very minutest details; everything that human ingenuity could devise had been thought out; nothing had been left to chance in the arrangements that had been made. The foregoing are the principal items that struck me whilst with Andrée. Unfortunately the preparations took so long a time that a start was impossible when I was with him, this being effected the following spring when I was unable to be there. I think, though, that he had a fair chance of success had the Fates proved propitious. I had pointed out

*ANDREE'S
COOKING APPARATUS
FOR USE IN BALLOON*





Andrée's Cooking-stove

to him that coiling down his drag-ropes outside the balloon shed, as he was compelled to do, owing to the ground being covered with rocks, was a very weak point.

I understand that when the start was made early in the next year the front of the shed was pulled out, and the drag-ropes in some way or other fouled in the débris, as I imagined might be the case. This brought the balloon down almost into the water, to avoid which Andrée was compelled to free one set of his drag-ropes in order to loose the balloon. He would then, with at least a ton less to lift, have shot into the air some thousands of feet high. He would not open his valves to approach the surface again, for it was important that he should reserve his supply of gas, trusting to the natural escape from diffusion to accomplish this object. When last seen he was travelling due north, but at a great height. Now, to soliloquize as to what happened to him. My idea is that he remained, so long as he could travel, in this satisfactory direction. He would have put out his spare set of drag-ropes so soon as possible, in order that the weight of them should, on reaching the ice, ease his descent owing to waste of gas. I think that these ropes may have proved his undoing; they probably got caught up in a crevasse, acting as an anchor. If the wind had been blowing fresh to strong the balloon would inevitably

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have canted over dangerously towards the ice; this in direct ratio to the strength of the wind. Perhaps—for it is all surmise on my part—the car and balloon from being thus anchored hit the ice, and this may have tumbled out one or more of the occupants of the car, together with much of the freight and stores the balloon carried. She would then no doubt strain, or break away the ropes, leaving one or more of the travellers on the ice. Relieved of this weight she would again shoot high into the air, when, in all probability, she met other currents of air that may have blown her in exactly the opposite direction to that intended. The result would be disaster. Those on the ice must die of starvation and exposure, whilst if one passenger was left in the balloon to continue the journey the same fate would eventually be his if he landed, as he may well have done, in the centre of Greenland. I like to remember Andrée as the man of all others whom I have met whose will and singleness of purpose were alike magnificent. He failed, but his very failure was more splendid than many a lesser man's success. He gave me a signed photograph, which I reproduce. "Peace be to his ashes." His country and the world in general are the poorer for his loss.

As the time was drawing near when I should have to return to England I set myself seriously to work to catch some of the gulls and



From a photograph by Atelier Horman, Stockholm

J. A. Mödér.
26.7.96.
Danes gate. Petersburg

Catching Gulls

birds I wanted to take back with me. I had no difficulty in catching the ivory gulls; there were plenty of these pretty little birds around Danes Ghat, but I only wanted two or three at most. I used the padded traps I had obtained in Trondhjem with seal's fat as bait, and this they seemed unable to resist. When caught I tethered them by the leg until I had a box made in which I could transport them home. I also caught a specimen of Richardson's and Buffon's skuas, all of which fed freely in captivity. The glaucous gulls defeated me completely, not that I had any difficulty in catching them, but they absolutely refused to touch food of any description when caught, until they became living skeletons, and out of sheer compassion I had to give them their liberty. One in particular was very obdurate. I had put a big lump of seal's fat on a hummock of ice sixty yards away in order to get the various birds to feed freely on it. This particular bird, though starving, would not touch the daintiest morsels I provided him with so long as he was tied by the leg, but as soon as I liberated him he at once discovered and demolished the greater part of the fat I had put down at a distance. I somehow respected that bird. His cussedness was manifest in that he preferred to starve to death rather than feed in captivity.

On my return to England I presented the

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birds I had succeeded in bringing back alive to the London Zoological Gardens. Here they lived for some months, the ivory gulls eventually dying from being, I fancy, so well fed. There were small fish for them galore ; result, too much fat ! No exercise ! Death !

Whilst at Danes Ghat I collected quite a large sack of eider-down. These ducks are numerous on the small islands in this vicinity. The down is plucked by the ducks from their breasts and is used to line their nests with, which consist but of hollows scooped out of the ground. In Norway these birds are protected by law, the down only being collected. The eggs are only moderately good to eat, being somewhat strong and fishy. The down is more often than not mixed up with seaweed and other foreign substances. The Norwegians separate it by tossing between sticks, the heavier particles falling to the ground. I tried this method, but found it exceedingly tedious. Unfortunately some thief took a fancy to my sack of down on my way through Norway and stole the lot.

I had, whilst at Danes Ghat, one shot at a walrus—he was asleep on a small ice hummock. I hit him in the head with a bullet from my Paradox, which must have killed him instantly, for he fell over into the sea and sank. The water was much discoloured with blood, but was

Eider-down

too deep for me to harpoon him. I could see him at the bottom, but his size was evidently not sufficiently large for an old bull.

The night before my return to Ice Fjord Andrée and his associates in the steamer *Virgo* gave me a farewell dinner. This was distinguished by the good fellowship that existed between us, and I specially remember the variety of the drinks consumed, all of which one was supposed to sample. Andrée promised me that evening that he would dine with me the first night he spent in London, should he return successfully from his great trip.

On my return to Ice Fjord I found one of the large Orient steamers which had brought up a party of tourists. One Frenchman came ashore armed to the teeth. In his hand was a revolver, at his side a long *couteau de chasse*, and on his shoulder a combination double-barrelled rifle and shot-gun. After remaining on the beach for twenty minutes he fired off all the barrels of his revolver into the air, then peacefully rejoined the steamer. Some friends of mine happened to be passengers on this ship, and were kind enough to ask me to dinner. As I had really not had a decent meal for many weeks I was glad of the opportunity of a change. There was a man on board who was acting as correspondent to a large daily London paper, and he also asked me to dine that same evening, in fact, would take

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no refusal, so I had the unique experience of eating two dinners within an hour of each other, a doubtful pleasure, for I had already satisfied my hunger with the first !

Whilst with Andrée I found it extremely hard to distinguish night from day. It often happened that I did not turn in for a sleep until the afternoon of a day, and in this way I missed a trip which I had looked forward to with much anticipation. I would find myself having breakfast at four in the afternoon, the other meals being correspondingly erratic. My friend Arnold Pike owned a wooden steamer that he had used on a previous occasion for hunting walrus and polar bears, and he had given instructions to his captain to make a trip to the north, as he was unable to go in her himself, nor was he able to let her to a shooting party. I had made arrangements before leaving Norway that the skipper should call in at Danes Ghat to pick me up. This he did, making inquiries for me. By a mistake some of Andrée's men told him I had gone off to get eider-down, whereas I was in reality asleep within a few yards of him. I thus lost the chance of obtaining a polar bear skin, for I heard on his return that they had killed a good many walrus and a nice lot of bears. The steamer that was to take us back to Norway now put in an appearance at Ice Fjord. It seemed that we only missed seeing Nansen by an hour or so ;

Eider-down

for the *Fram* arrived at Hammerfest shortly after we did. Excitement ran high over this famous explorer's return. Flags were flying from all ships and on shore, our small expedition paling into utter insignificance.

CHAPTER XI

Tarpon-fishing—Fort Myers—Captiva and Boca Grande Passes
—A Logger-head Turtle—Aransas Pass—Mocking-bird.

Bright before it beat the water,
Beat the clear and shining water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-water.—LONGFELLOW.

ONCE more on my way abroad—this time to Florida on a tarpon-fishing expedition. I had never been to the West Indies, so decided on that route via Barbados and Jamaica, and spent a few weeks seeing the sights, eventually crossing over to America, landing at Tampa, thence by train to Punta Gorda. I had no rods or tackle with which to try conclusions with the tarpon, and was advised to telegraph to Von Holf, in New York, for two rods, two multiplying reels, and the twenty-two-thread flax lines suitable. These, together with a supply of hooks and piano-wire traces, eventually came to hand.

In 1897 the number of fishermen who had found out the charms of this fishing was but small. I went by the small river steamer to a place called Fort Myers, and put up at the local hotel, next day hunting for a guide and fisherman, whom I found in one Bartley, the owner

Fort Myers

of a small sailing cutter of six or seven tons, in which we used to go up and down the Caloot-shihatchi River, and sometimes make excursions beyond those limits.

A tarpon is a magnificent fish, and when freshly caught its scales shine like beaten silver. It is now so commonly seen in England in a stuffed state that a description may almost seem superfluous, but there may be those who have never seen even a cased specimen. I therefore shall try to describe, however ineffectually, this very handsome fish. It is supposed to be of the herring tribe, I say supposed, for I do not think a great deal is known about it in reality. Personally I could never see such a striking resemblance to a herring, except perhaps as regards the shape and projecting under jaw and the more or less forked tail. It has a curiously shaped addition or appendage behind the dorsal fin, which is locally known as the bayonet—in fact, the resemblance to that weapon is somewhat striking. The fish has a hard, bony lower jaw, in shape somewhat like the lower jaw of a man, but minus teeth; the lips and tongue in the fresh specimen are blackish, and very hard and rough, which suggested to me the idea that they prey not so much on fish—although I have seen them chasing fishes, and have caught them with a hook baited with a live mullet—but rather that they habitually

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live on crustacea, crabs, and the like. The tarpon are covered, when freshly caught, with a thick slime ; this, if you get it on to your clothes, is almost impossible to remove ; a worthless suit is therefore the only thing to wear when out fishing for them. Their scales, some of which are as large as small saucers, are peculiar, a quarter of each one being tipped with a coating of silver, the subsequent scales overlapping one another, so that the silver portion only appears. The largest scale on each side of the fish is to be found on the centre of the body ; above and below and on each side of this one, the scales gradually diminish in size. The tarpon is supposed to have a lung of sorts. I can vouch for the fact that on a very still calm evening whilst fishing for them they can be heard to give forth a sort of puff as they rise to the surface of the water, which sound I cannot account for, unless it is produced by expelling the air through the mouth. The flesh is very dark red, somewhat like horse-beef, and they bleed profusely when cut open. The inhabitants of the district say that the meat is not nice to eat, but as I did not personally try the experiment, I cannot offer an opinion on the subject. I was intensely puzzled to know why these fish enter the freshwater rivers ; I can but think that spawning purposes have something to do with it. For a few miles above Fort Myers little tarpon of three or four

Fort Myers

pounds' weight can be caught with a fly-rod, whereas all those I saw and handled from the sea were well over one hundred pounds each. In the freshwater rivers an entirely different method of catching them is pursued to that in the salt-water passes. In the former a small boat is moored anywhere in a spot that may be considered likely. A few dead mullet are then cut up into pieces and thrown overboard in the vicinity of the boat. This is termed in the vernacular "chumming," but in England would be known as "ground-baiting." The rod is but seven feet long and very stiff; the two I own are made of ironwood, but any suitable stuff, such as cane, hickory, or greenheart, may be used. The reel is a multiplying one, and is large enough to hold easily two hundred yards of very thin but extremely strong flax line. The reel has a piece of raw hide sewn on to one of its bars; this is used as a brake to check the rush of the fish, and is worked by pressing the leather on to the line on the drum of the reel with the thumb. Two rods or more can be used in chunk-bait fishing, and to the reel line is fastened a snood or strip of raw hide, and to this the large hook. The hooks being baited and line weighted with lead to keep them on the bottom, the check is taken off the reel and the baited hooks thrown some distance from the boat. A little line is loosely coiled down on the bottom-boards of the

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boat, so that the fish will not be checked after it has taken the bait, for it would then probably eject the morsel without a "run" being effected. For this reason, too, the check of the reel is left off, for it is the work of an instant to put that on again. Now comes the sitting and waiting. Often when tarpon are not on the feed this becomes monotonous. Sometimes a huge Jew fish, which may weigh anything up to four hundred pounds, and whose mouth is as large as a small coal-scuttle, will annex your bait. These fish do not fight, but remain like stones, and are only reeled in by sheer strength. Then a shark may, and probably will, seize the bait, a shark perhaps ten feet long and weighing two or more hundredweight. Its rush is sharp at first, but it is very easily drowned, and soon turns up the fight. Still another intruder, the swordfish, an enormous brute weighing perhaps three or four hundredweight! It is interesting to watch the coils of line that are loose. The local expert can tell more or less what fish has taken the bait by watching the line run out. For instance, a shark picks up the piece of bait and draws out the line in intermittent jerks, whereas the tarpon takes off the line in a steady, regular fashion. We will suppose that at last one of these latter fish takes the bait. You give him line until he has taken out some twenty or thirty yards, then when he has presumably had

Fort Myers

time to swallow the hook, you strike (or, as the local people term it, "snub him"), to fix the hook firmly. Then the fun begins, for that tarpon, on the instant he feels the hook, jumps clean out of the water six or seven feet into the air, shakes his head, turns somersaults, and behaves generally as though he were mad. The boatman, meanwhile, has thrown overboard his small buoy that marks where the anchor is left, and paddles cautiously after the flying fish. The excitement is great, and the exertion required is downright back-breaking hard work. A good fish will jump twenty or more times, taking the line from the reel in rushes of one hundred yards at a time, finally jumping into the air. This, too, although you are putting every pound of strain on the rod and thumb-brake that you can possibly exert. At length, perhaps after thirty minutes' frantic efforts on both sides, the fish can be towed near enough to the boat to allow the gaff to be used. This has to be stuck into his gills, for it is impossible to drive the point of the gaff, however large, sharp, and strong it may be, through those thick scales of his. At length you have him; the end of a rope is passed through his mouth and gills, and he is made fast to the stern of the boat, to be eventually towed to wherever you are living, and then weighed. If you are staying in a hotel, it is the custom to present one

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of the large scales to the proprietor, who writes your name on it in ink, and a few particulars, such as the date, weight, and time taken to kill the fish; these are nailed up on a board and hung up in the hall that "those who run may read." A tarpon caught in the way described does not give such good sport as one that may be hooked whilst trolling. There are two reasons for this, one being that in chunk-fishing the fish is allowed to swallow the bait, and cannot therefore fight so hard with the iron in his stomach as one that is hooked in the mouth. Then it is rare that a fish is lost in the former method, for by no means can a tarpon disgorge the hook when it has been swallowed, and, barring accidents, such as breaking the line, hook or rod, or by getting hung up in some obstacle, it is only a question of patience and strength before the fish be brought to the gaff. This is all altered when trolling, and this manner of fishing is far more sportsmanlike as practised in the openings that occur between the reefs on the sea coast, and are termed "Passes." The two Passes I know best are "Captiva" and "Boca Grande." The water is very deep, the tide running at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour. The boat is moored with a long rope and big stone in a likely place, a buoy being fastened to the rope end that comes inboard. When a fish strikes, this buoy is at once thrown



ANTOINE CATCHING GREY MULLET WITH A CAST NET
FOR BAIT



BARTLEY AND 18-FOOT HAMMERHEAD SHARK



Captiva and Boca Grande Passes

overboard and the boat is rowed after the fish. The flood tide I found the best for hooking tarpon—they seem to come in from the sea on the flood and go out on the ebb tides. It is not advisable to fish too deeply here, for should you do so it is almost a certainty that you hook a shark or Jew fish, which are nuisances and take some time to kill. You must be careful, though, to weight your line according to circumstances, observing what sport other boats may be having, and if you fail to get a strike when fishing light, try deeper. The bait in this case will be either a live mullet, a thin slice from off the mullet's side, leaving the scales on, or—what I found to be the most killing bait of all—a piece of skin taken from the white belly of a shark. This is exceedingly tough and will last a long time. A certain amount of care is necessary in the preparation of this bait, but the time is well spent. Tarpon take it splendidly, and cannot tear it off the hook owing to its toughness. I made mine in this way: I cut out a piece of skin five or six inches long in the shape of a fish, the head part rounded off, then cut off all the meat possible, scraping it clean, and shaved the pointed tail end as thin as I could get it with a sharp knife. The hook is inserted in the thick rounded end about a quarter of an inch from its edge. This bait shows admirably in the water, and in a tideway the tail portion wags

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most temptingly. In trolling you will find that you lose a large percentage of fish that strike. This is owing to the extreme toughness of the tarpon's mouth, into which it is very hard to drive a hook over the barb. For the fish leaps into the air so soon as it feels the hook, shaking its head, a process that more often than not produces—from the fish's point of view—the desired result.

I have seen some funny things happen whilst fishing for tarpon. On one occasion a friend of mine hooked a good fish that leapt into the air, came towards the fisherman, jumped into the boat, and knocked the man who was rowing on to his back. It was a marvel the boat did not capsize, for the brute weighed at least 150 lbs. On another occasion a girl of about eighteen years of age hooked a fish the first time she ever attempted to fish for them. Her behaviour was most amusing, for her hat hung down over one ear, her hair came down, and her screams of delight as the fish jumped awakened the usual solitude of the place. She stuck to her task splendidly, though, playing the fish to a finish without any help, which was quite a creditable performance, ending the fight by being put ashore. Here I had the pleasure of gaffing her first tarpon, which on being weighed pulled down the beam at 160 lbs. On another occasion a little old

A Logger-head Turtle

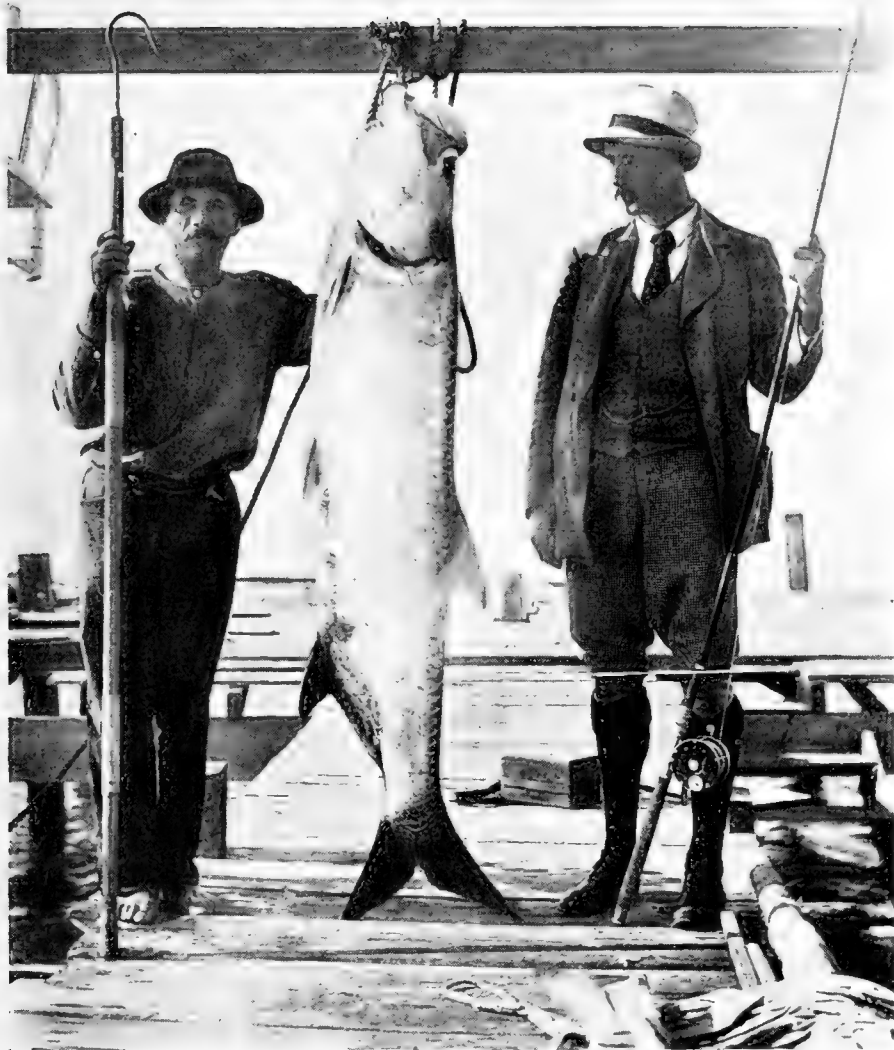
gentleman with very white hair was fishing when he foul-hooked a logger-head turtle. This was on my second visit to Florida, in the spring of 1898. I knew this turtle well by sight, for he would come in on almost every flood tide, and often approached close to the boats that were moored in the stream, and was distinguishable by the number of barnacles that grew on the top of his head. On this occasion the large hook caught him under the near fore-flipper. Many of us left off fishing to surround the boat in order to see the finish of the fight. It ended in favour of the old gentleman, who at last managed to draw the unwieldy brute close up to his boat, when it was secured with a rope end; it was then towed off to a launch that had brought the fishermen to the ground, and hauled on board by the aid of a small davit that was affixed to the side. That turtle must have weighed somewhere in the neighbourhood of four hundred pounds, for it was a monster. I cannot imagine what they did with it eventually, as it was useless for food, and the shell was not of any use commercially. Had I caught this beast, I should, I think, have allowed him to escape and end his harmless days in peace.

April and May are the best months in which to visit Florida for tarpon-fishing. It is splendid fun, the only drawback being that the fish are useless for food when caught. For this reason,

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many fishermen were in the habit of giving their captives their freedom after a successful fight. Mosquitoes are a nuisance in these places ; in the evenings they worry one to desperation, so it is as well to provide oneself with a pot of ointment that is warranted to ward off their attacks.

On the two occasions that I visited Florida, I chartered Bartley's sailing-boat—the accommodation on her was extremely limited, and I “ pigged ” it considerably. Nowadays I believe there is a fairly comfortable hotel built in the neighbourhood that caters specially for the fishermen guests. The proprietor supplies boats, guides, and no doubt, on an emergency, the necessary fishing-tackle. On the occasion of my second visit to Florida sport was but poor. There were too many people on the ground, so I betook myself to try a new place, Aransas Pass, in Texas. Here I had most wonderful sport. My best day was three fish, and I missed nineteen ! The reason I lost so many of them was owing to the fact that I wanted to take some snapshots with my camera of the fish whilst in mid-air. To this end I had to hand over the rod to Antoine, my boatman, and between us we made a mess of things. The photographs, too, were not a success, for they were mostly out of focus, and, moreover, my shutter was not fast enough.



THE AUTHOR, ANTOINE, AND A TARPON

Mocking-bird

At the small hotel where I stayed was an old nigger woman who did the cooking. She owned the most delightful mocking-bird it has ever been my fortune to listen to. She had reared him from the nest, and he was absolutely tame. Now, the old lady loved her bird, and he seemed to reciprocate her affection, whilst I coveted him. I spent my spare time in bribing her to sell him to me, but it was not until the last day of my visit that an offer of ten dollars rewarded my importunities, and I became the proud possessor of that bird and cage. I took him in the railway car on my way back to San Francisco. The motion of the train seemed to excite him into surpassing even himself, for he sang, imitated a chicken, and whistled during the greater part of the day. He became a great attraction to the passengers, who crowded into the carriage to listen to him. This bird's end was sad. I managed to get him to Victoria, British Columbia, in safety, leaving him in charge of the woman in whose house I stayed, until such time as I should return from Alaska. Unfortunately she did not give him a sufficient supply of ants' eggs and similar food, with the result that he died. These birds are very difficult to keep, as they are most delicate, and feel the cold severely.

CHAPTER XII

Return to Canada—Okanagan—Porcupine—Wild Horses—
Siwash Indians—Potlach dance—A Trip to Alaska—Soapy
Smith.

Who hath seen the beaver busied? Who hath seen the black-tail
mating?

Who hath lain alone to hear the wild-goose cry?

Who hath worked the chosen water where the ouananiche is waiting,
Or the sea-trout's jumping—crazy for the fly?

RUDYARD KIPLING.

I WENT home to England after my first tarpon trip, but returned to Canada the following spring, bent on two things—one to visit Lake St. John to fish for ouananiche, the land-locked salmon, and the other to bag a musk ox.

On my arrival I went to see the officials of the Hudson Bay Company, whose help I required in order to get beyond the Peace River, but, owing to the Klondike rush, they could not promise me any assistance, and I was reluctantly obliged to abandon the expedition.

I was too early in the year for ouananiche, so decided to go into the Okanagan country, where I was given to understand I could get some good shooting at mule-deer, white-tailed deer, and Rocky Mountain sheep. Some people have a

Okanagan

notion that because a decent head has been bagged in a certain district, game is certain to be plentiful there. I was always finding, to my cost, that such was not the case.

In this particular part the numerous prospectors and Indians have so entirely shot out the place that not only was game shy and hard to get at, but the heads were hardly worth the time and trouble expended in looking for them. I spent about seven months in the mountains trying to kill a good sheep, but at the end of that time had to admit that my chances of being successful were but moderate. I killed a few decent rams, but not one that measured fifteen inches round the base of the horn. I also killed a good many black-tailed deer, but here again the heads were small. The Indians had long since found out that a fine head commanded a good sum in ready cash. Besides that, they sold the meat to the mining camps, so it was no wonder that my efforts were unavailing. I do not mean to say that I did not have a good time and enjoy myself, for I loved every minute spent in the woods; the freedom and lack of conventionality suited me so well that I felt I could never again live in a house. Most of us are more or less savages at heart—perhaps I am a little more so than most men.

I had a great fright one day. I had killed a black-tailed buck, and poisoned the two hind-

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quarters with strychnine. I wanted to kill a number of coyotes. For although there were a great many of these animals about, the difficulty of trapping them, owing to their extreme shyness and wariness, prevented my making any successful efforts to get them in that way. I went out one morning to a place where I had left one of these haunches, and found on arrival three dead coyotes. Having skinned them, I proceeded to the place where I had left the other remaining poison, and was horrified to find that it had disappeared altogether! I knew that some Indians had been in this particular locality during the last day or so, and thought that possibly one of them had picked up the meat to take back to his home. Snow had fallen heavily the night before I put down the bait, which I had cached on the side of a slope. The morning and previous afternoon had been warm, with the result that the snow had melted completely away in the neighbourhood of the place where I had left the meat.

I went eventually into a valley in which the snow still remained, striking the trail of a mountain lion, or puma, that had dragged the meat as far as this. My mind was immensely relieved when my fears concerning the Indians were dispersed.

The wooded slopes of the mountains joined the plain within half a mile of where I stood.

Okanagan

Feeling sure that the beast had taken the meat this way, I mounted my cayuse (the Indian name for horse) and rode along at the foot of the mountain until I eventually found the spoor again, the trail going into the mountain. The tracking was easy here on account of the snow. The beast had picked up the meat in its mouth, travelling as much as three or four hundred yards or more before putting it down. Here the imprint of the haunch, which weighed quite twenty pounds, distinctly showed in the snow, so I trailed for more than an hour. The puma, for I was sure it was one of these animals from its tracks, was evidently making for its den. I hoped that it might have eaten a portion of the meat—the smallest quantity would have been sufficient to have killed it in a few minutes, for the poison was liberally applied. However, this did not happen, but I arrived at a huge pile of rocks at last where the tracks disappeared, and I eventually discovered a small opening amongst them that evidently marked where the beast I was in search of had taken refuge. The place was an impossible one to open up, so I had reluctantly to leave it. I had left my horse at least a mile away tethered by my lariat to a tree. On my way back I made a short cut by leaving my back trail, intending to rejoin it farther down the mountain. On passing some rocks I came upon a porcupine nosing about, and this I

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shot. It was the first of the kind I had seen, and differs from its African cousin in that it is smaller and the quills are much shorter. The Indians eat porcupines, cooking them by putting the whole animal without disembowelling it on the fire, which burns off the spines. They can then handle the creature without injuring their hands; it now looks fearsome and more like a dead puppy than a porcupine, and it is cooked in the ordinary way. I tasted the leg of one I shot in Alaska, finding it very much in flavour like chicken, and the meat very tender. My Indians seemed to enjoy the feast, but I much preferred a piece of venison, for the appearance of the porcupine during the preparation of cooking was warranted to put one off one's feed.

In the mountains of British Columbia there were many bands of wild horses, which the Indians sometimes "rounded up." These were the descendants of those that had escaped from domesticity from time to time and joined the bands born in freedom. The Indians had a way of securing a picked specimen from a "bunch," which might by the slightest mistake have proved fatal to the victim. The particular animal being chosen, the selector carefully stalked it. The greatest caution was necessary in the approach, for wild horses are as difficult to stalk as wild sheep, which is saying a great deal.

Wild Horses

Having got within range, the Indian shot the horse in the neck, aiming at a spot about three inches below the crest. If the shot was successful the beast dropped as though stone dead. The man then hurried up, hobbled the legs, and put the running noose of a lariat round its neck. In a few minutes the animal, which had but been stunned or paralysed by the blow and was not seriously injured, recovered. Of course, if the spine was hit, death was instantaneous, but I believe many horses were captured in this way. The method was termed "creasing." If, on the other hand, a few horses had been corralled into a strongly made yard built of stout timber, the captor proceeded to lasso one with his rope. The noose flew over the horse's head on to its neck, and a quick turn of the rope round a post was taken by the man with the end he had in his hand. The horse, struggling furiously, tightened up the noose until he nearly strangled himself, and in a few moments fell to the ground. The rope was then at once slackened, both at the post and at the noose, hobbles were put on, and the animal allowed to regain its breath. It is marvellous what an effect this "choking-down" process, as it is termed, had upon the beast. For one or two sharp lessons of the sort were as much as the average one could stand, until at last the end of a rope thrown across a partly broken beast's withers made it shake like

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a leaf. No wonder, for the treatment, although successful, is brutally severe.

I rode for some time a roan mare that had been broken in this way. She had been ridden by my English boy, Alfred, for a few days before I essayed to mount her, and had been running wild in the mountains a month previously. She was a wall-eyed, tricky beast at best, and would kick viciously if her heels were approached. I gave ten dollars for her, which was cheap enough, and I bought five very weedy and useless specimens, that had never even been handled, for five dollars each. These would follow my pack-horses at a few yards' distance, but would not allow me to approach them. Horses of this stamp were shot at various places in the mountains by my Indians as bait for grizzlies—about all they were fit for.

The Indians in British Columbia are a poor lot. They are of the Siwash tribe, and their language varies in different localities, that of the trade being "Chinook"—a combination of Indian and English words jumbled up together. They live in rancherees, or small settlements, and their huts are extremely dirty and badly built. No whisky or spirits is allowed by law to be given or sold to any Indians, under any circumstances. Under its influence they go wild, and for this reason a heavy fine is inflicted on any one who thus supplies them. The squaws

Potlach Dance

are extremely dirty and still more ugly, but they are quite adepts with the needle, making mocassins, buckskin shirts, etc., splendidly. The wife of my old Indian hunter tanned two or three of my deer hides, and afterwards made them into shirts for me.

Whilst at Victoria I witnessed a "potlach," or dance, which for primitive savagery was hard to beat. I found myself one evening accompanying a friend to a big rancheree in the neighbourhood. In a large barn of a room were squatted all the natives of the district. The room was illuminated only by the light of a big wood fire burning in a huge iron brazier in the centre, which threw fitful lights and shadows over those present. I had been to a big duck shoot a day or so previously, when we had killed over two hundred birds of sorts. These we had given to the chief, who in turn had divided them amongst his people; and the potlach was got up for me as a sort of return favour.

In the corner of this room, screened off from the rest by an old blanket, hung over a string, came groans and shouts of the weirdest description. I was told that they emanated from a man who was the champion dancer of the neighbourhood. Whilst this man was working himself up into a state of sufficient keenness to take the floor, the proceedings were enlivened by the performances of a young woman of perhaps

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twenty years of age. To call her exhibition dancing would be to stultify the whole art of Terpsichore. For it resolved itself into nothing more or less than a perpetual circling round the fire in a sort of "Dervish" dance, only much more slowly accomplished. This was accompanied by groans and wailings, until the woman had worked herself up into such a pitch of enthusiasm that she had become "ecstatic." The tears streamed from her eyes, and the saliva trickled from the corners of her mouth on to her dress until the sight utterly disgusted me. She simply was unable to stop, and I expected every minute to see the shocking performance come to an abrupt end by her going into a fit, fainting, or doing something equally horrible. I suppose that the chief, seeing that we had nearly had enough of it, gave the sign to the woman's friends. For they proceeded half to help and half to carry her off the scene, and dumped her into a corner, where I conclude she had leisure to collect her scattered senses. Meanwhile it seems that the hidden champion had over-excited himself. For he was altogether unable "to come up to scratch," a circumstance for which we were duly thankful. Had he improved upon the performance we had already witnessed I should probably have either started dancing "on my own" or have had to make a hurried exit from the show. Some years ago,

A Trip to Alaska

when these dances were more common, whilst in this state of temporary madness, the dancers ended their performance by tearing a live native dog to pieces with their teeth. This practice had to be stopped by law. Whilst they were at it, the authorities might have prohibited the dance altogether. It was a sight warranted to disgust the most case-hardened beholder.

After my second tarpon-fishing trip to Florida and Aransas Pass, in Texas, which I have previously mentioned, I was half inclined to go to Dawson City and the Klondike to try what luck I might have at prospecting for gold. But the time for the small investor had to a great extent passed—money was pouring into that district in shoals, and as my stock of ready money was rather limited I thought I might do better by going up to Cook's Inlet, in Alaska. I had heard the most marvellous stories of the big moose that were to be obtained in the district, and also a report that a new wild sheep had been shot. I therefore decided that my money would be better spent in trying to obtain sport than in seeking the elusive nugget. Accordingly, I bought in Victoria what seemed to me to be the necessary outfit. Many of the articles, such as flour, bacon, tobacco, and the like, I could, as I found later on, have obtained nearly as cheaply at my destination, but I thought it best to be on the safe side, as little

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or no information could, in those days, be obtained of the conditions to be found in Alaska.

One of the most useful things I bought—a similar one I have never seen before or since—was a small cooking-stove. It was made of thin sheet iron, measuring across the top some three feet by two feet and fourteen inches deep. It had a compartment in which bread or a cake could be baked, and was provided with a collapsible chimney of the same material as the main fabric. This stove proved of the greatest assistance and comfort, as it could be kept going splendidly with the smallest amount of fuel such as chips or small sticks. It was very light, not weighing more than ten or twelve pounds, and therefore easily handled, and I used it inside my tent, and was able on many occasions to dry out my sodden clothes, a blessing in itself, when I state that on one small trip, after bears, the rain came down in a practically unceasing downpour during all the time that I was away.

I left Victoria in the s.s. *Cottage City*, and went by way of Wrangel, Juneau, Skagway, and Sitka. At Skagway I met with an adventure which might easily have cost me my life; in fact, had I not been an Englishman, I believe that my wanderings would have reached an abrupt termination. It seemed that here was one of the starting-places over the White Horse



SKAGWAY AND "SOAPY SMITH" CLOSE TO THE TELEGRAPH POLE

Soapy Smith

Pass for the Klondike. This city, as it was termed, consisted only of a single street with wooden houses or shacks built throughout its short length of perhaps a quarter of a mile. Goods from the wharf and steamers were loaded on a tram-line which traversed the centre of the street. The captain of my steamer had publicly warned his passengers to beware of a "bad" man named "Soapy" Smith and his gang, as he was a notorious desperado and blackguard. He had been "fired out" of Dawson City by the North-West Mounted Police, and had made Skagway, as it were, his own. The sobriquet of "Soapy" had been acquired in this way, not that he failed in any respect as to "slickness," but from the fact that when he was in California, where he was wanted badly for various swindling tricks, he was in the habit, when almost on his "beam ends," owing to lack of money, to have recourse to the following dodge to obtain it. He bought a bar of common yellow soap. This he cut up into tiny cubes, wrapping up each piece of soap in a two-dollar bill (or note), which were mostly counterfeits, and having then walked out with one or more of his confederates, he would, at some quiet corner of a street, collect a crowd and hawk these lumps of soap, and sell them for fifty cents each. Occasionally, as a draw, he would give a genuine "greenback" for his victim's money, but in the vast majority

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of cases the note was a "wrong 'un." To a new mining camp "bad men" make it convenient to find their way as soon as may be. Skagway was no exception to this rule. This accounted for the skipper's warning. I had not intended going ashore at all, as I had several letters to write, and the "city" looked so very uninteresting that I imagined I was missing nothing. There was amongst the first-class passengers a nice American, with whom I had formed a friendship. He was a man of about sixty years of age, and quite six feet six inches in height. He came to the smoking-room where I was sitting, and asked if I would care to go ashore with him. I agreed after some persuasion, and took my camera with me. The jetty, or pier, was of a great length, quite three hundred yards long, and at the end of it my companion stood on the sidewalk, whilst I took a snapshot of the street. I changed the plate, and was on the point of rejoining my companion, when a man came up, who was no other than the notorious Soapy Smith, and began talking to him. The newcomer was small, slight, and rather dapper-looking. He talked to my tall friend, asking all sorts of questions, such as were we going to Dawson, and demanded details as to the Spanish-Cuban War, which was then at its height. Personally I was not interested, nor did I speak until I heard Soapy say, "Wouldn't you gentle-

Soapy Smith

men like to see a fine lot of nuggets my mate has just brought out from Dawson ? ” My friend then turned to me and said, “ Would you like to see them ? ” and I replied, “ No ! I have seen lots. I do not suppose they vary from other gold nuggets.” We walked to the end of the street, and were turning round preparatory to going aboard our steamer again, when Smith said, “ There’s my ‘ pard ’ ”—hailing a man at the same time. We were then opposite a neat wooden house, the door of which stood open, “ Pard ” being in the doorway. “ I have brought these gentlemen to show them your nuggets,” said Smith. “ Come right along in,” said the other. It seemed almost rude to refuse, so my tall friend bent his long back and entered the house, and I followed. A small boy of fifteen was sitting in the room, and “ Pard ” said, “ Go over to the bank and bring along some of them nuggets I want to show these gentlemen.” A few minutes later an elderly man put in an appearance, looking very distressed and worried, saying, “ That blackguard Soapy Smith has done me down to the tune of eight hundred dollars—all I had left.” He bemoaned his fate until Soapy said, “ Serves you right, you must have been an old ‘ sucker ’ ; say, how did he do it ? ” The old man then said, “ With them cards—I took them away with me.” Very clumsily he now proceeded to demonstrate the three-card

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trick by which he had lost his money. I happened to say, "You must have been a fool to lose your money at that game—any child knows it." "Stop!" said the ancient one. "I thought I knew all about them tricks, but they did me down, sure, for they turned down the corner of the card I was to find"—illustrating the method. "Well, I found the card all right and won several times small money. I thought it quite easy, and they led me on until I had put my all on one stake, for I was sure I could win his money, but I lost it, and how do you think they done me? Why, he had turned down all three corners of the cards he played with." Turning to me, he said, "You'd have been done too, I reckon." "I don't think so," I said, "for I should not have made a guess," whereat he threw the cards down on the table with one corner of one turned down slightly, which my tall friend picked, being correct, so simple! I wanted to go back to the ship and said so. The old man suggested my having a try. More from good nature than anything else, I bet him a five-dollar bill I was right in picking a card: of course, I was wrong, for the corners of all three cards were bent. Now this yarn seems simple: I give it in detail to show how a man may drop his money, knowing perfectly well that he is being swindled. The circumstances were so plausible, these yarns of awaiting the coming of the nuggets—for, by

Soapy Smith

the way, the boy did not turn up. It was all so natural that during the wait we should talk, and—— Well, they did me down too, and I am not ashamed to own it. I think it was five dollars well spent, for I learnt the depth of that particular game and the “trimmings” that attended it. The moral of the story is this: Soapy and his gang supposed that my friend and I were leaving the steamer at Skagway, that we should, according to the custom of the country, carry the greater part of our worldly goods on our persons, and that they would be able to make a rich haul. That they would, had it suited their book, have shot one or both of us goes without saying, and that we were covered by a “gun” during the time we were in that house is also a fair certainty. On my arrival on board the steamer I took pains to discover the status of my tall companion who shared my experience. For I thought he might have been “in the crowd.” I quite satisfied myself that he was a most estimable gentleman, and very well known in Seattle: but one never knows!

Whilst on the subject of Soapy Smith, I may as well relate a few true stories concerning the man and his end, which for calm cheek and daring are hard to beat. An embryo prospector, with his wife and child of ten years old, landed at Skagway on the way to Dawson. The man got into the clutches of the band, who, by means of tricks



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at cards, lightened him of eight hundred dollars—all he possessed. On telling his wife, this lady sought out Soapy Smith, crying bitterly, and saying that they were stranded without a cent. Soapy comforted the poor woman, then handed her a five-hundred-dollar bill, a good one, too, at that, with this remark : “ Here’s five hundred dollars for you, ma’am. Take care of that man of yours, for he ain’t fit to be about by hisself ! ”

A carpenter had bought a small block of land and had built himself a shack, thinking to earn a few dollars, as he owned two horses. He gave out that he was prepared to pack goods and freight with them up to, or over, the White Horse Pass. Soapy Smith, hearing this, gave him a job to pack a lot of useless things to the Pass. The man started from Skagway, and was barely out of the town on his journey when Soapy sold the poor fellow’s block of land and house to the highest bidder, for cash.

The gang consisted of Soapy, several lieutenants, and about thirty more scum of the earth. They had been running Skagway for months, every one being more or less scared of them. At last things became so bad that a Vigilance Committee was formed from the law-abiding citizens, headed by a man who had just arrived, and who was the new sheriff. All were determined to clear up these rascals. Soapy got to hear of the decision, and, collecting

Soapy Smith

his band, mounted a horse, and proceeded down the street to "make hay" generally. At the jetty end of the town he came face to face with the sheriff, and without giving him time to talk Soapy began shooting, mortally wounding his man. The sheriff, although dying, drew his revolver and shot Soapy dead. Then there was a general pandemonium, the townspeople proving victorious.

During the Cuban War Soapy is supposed to have offered to raise for the U.S.A. Government a body of men to be called "Smith's Rifle Rangers," to be commanded by himself. A witty American, who knew the man and his methods, summed up the offer dryly by saying, "Soapy Smith! I guess he'd range on the outskirts of any battlefield and rifle the pockets of the dead."

CHAPTER XIII

Alaska (*continued*)—Ravens—Copper River—Lynch Law—
Tyonak—Jim Matson—The Salmon-canning Industry—
Mosquitoes.

There's the land. (Have you seen it?)
It's the cussedest land that I know—
From the big, dizzy mountains that screen it,
To the deep, deathlike valleys below.
Some say God was tired when He made it;
Some say it's a fine land to shun;
Maybe: but there's some as would trade it
For no land on earth—and I'm one.

R. W. SERVICE.

I HAD to remain a few days in Sitka for the small steamer *Bertha*, that was to take me to Cook's Inlet, having to kick my heels about in this dull little place.

I was astonished at the number of ravens that I saw on the seashore; on one fish-house alone I counted over thirty. The Indians do not kill them, being superstitious about them, whilst the white inhabitants spare them owing to their usefulness as scavengers.

At last my steamer arrived, and I joyfully went aboard. I had met in Sitka a man named Dawson, who had been very ill from frostbite. He had lost all the toes from one foot; gangrene had then attacked the place, and he only saved



DAWSON AND HIS MOOSE TROPHIES

Copper River

his leg and possibly his life by his return to civilization, doctors, and good nursing. This man was a prospector and big-game hunter. It was from him that I obtained the first authentic news of what likelihood of success I might expect. He had spent months after moose and sheep, bringing out the trophies for the sake of the money he could make by selling them. I agreed to take him back to Kusiloff with me, paying his fare, as he seemed to have next to no money for that purpose. I half promised to take him with me into the woods, that is to say if he were well enough to accompany me. This, however, proved to be completely out of the question, as it was a matter of sheer impossibility for him to walk any distance, and I doubted the advisability of his returning to the rough life of that part of the country at all.

We had, as fellow-passenger, an American named Edgcombe, who had on board a number of horses and men. His was an expedition which had been sent out by the U.S.A. Government to try and find, or rather to make, a trail from Copper River to Dawson City, a distance, as the crow flies, of about four hundred miles. The purser of this steamer, a drunken little blackguard, and, I am ashamed to say, an Englishman by birth, was grossly impertinent to me one day when in his cups, and threatened to shoot me whilst we were at Copper River.

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Edgcombe had a nice cabin on deck, the only decent one on the ship, which he was good enough to ask me to share with him ; my doing so was the cause of the purser's wrath. He became so obnoxious and dangerous that not only did I speak to the skipper, an extremely nice Swede, but we slept with our revolvers on the table by our bunk's side, so as to be ready for emergencies. This purser made himself so disliked on board that a "round robin" was signed by the passengers and sent to the owners of the ship, describing the affair. Whether or not he obtained his discharge I do not know, but I shrewdly suspect that he was told his services were no longer required, for Americans won't have any tomfoolery of that description. Edgcombe left us at Copper River, where his horses were slung overboard, the steamer being beached for that purpose. This place was only a small bay, backed by high cliffs, and on one side by a huge glacier, over which Edgcombe had to transport his horses and packs—not a very enviable undertaking ! We found a large number of men, who had been spending some months prospecting for minerals in the surrounding country, camped on the beach awaiting our steamer. There must have been three hundred of them, most of whom were only too keen to get back to Seattle, tired of the hardships and exposure to which they had been

Lynch Law

subjected. On landing, we found these people in a state of excitement. It appeared that on the night preceding the day of our arrival one of a party of four who were of the same "outfit," and inhabited the same tent, seemed to think that his comrades disliked him for no apparent reason that I could learn ; probably he had been drinking heavily. He put his head inside the flap of the tent, then, pointing his revolver, shot dead on the spot, and in cold blood, two of his companions. The fourth man put the candle out, slipping beneath the canvas at the back. The assassin slept in the tent that night. In the morning the whole camp was wild with rage ; the murderer could not possibly have escaped into the back country, where he would inevitably have starved to death in a few days. The tent was surrounded on all sides by the angry miners, every man of whom was armed with a repeating-rifle. A tall man, who told me the story, then went up to the tent, calling out to the man inside to come out. He must have known that the game was up, and that, had he made a movement to shoot the man who was trying to arrest him, he would have been riddled with bullets from a hundred rifles. So he quietly handed up his "gun." He was then brought before a number of men who constituted themselves his judges—a miners' meeting—who, after hearing the evidence from the man who

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had escaped, and from the prisoner, condemned him to death. He was then taken at once on to the glacier, on the edge of which grew a small, shaking aspen tree. To this he was strung up by the neck, the body being cut down only an hour or so before our arrival, and thrown into a crevasse in the glacier. To show the callousness of this brute, the only words he spoke when he was being conducted to trial were these, "Waal, I guess you're going to kill the smartest revolver shot in the Western States of America." Such is "lynch" law, or the law of the land. Primitive civilization requires desperate remedies sometimes, but I think that in the vast majority of cases the prisoner gets a fair trial, and perhaps the "benefit of the doubt." It is essential that some such law must be enforced to safeguard life and belongings, and it resolves itself into the Mosaic system, "an eye for an eye." There are certain unwritten laws in a wild country such as this that must be upheld, the penalty of the breaking of them being death. One of these is murder, another theft. The consequences attaching to the latter may seem severe, but are well known to every one living in the country, native or white man. I consider the law is therefore just, for this simple reason—knowing that the penalty for theft is death, a man cannot excuse himself on the plea of ignorance. It would be impossible in such a

Lynch Law

place to imprison the culprit; there remains, then, nothing but the punishment of flogging or death, the latter being chosen as the more certain preventive. Theft, or the results of theft, may, and do, bring results that destroy one or a number of men from no fault of their own. You must, if I am to persuade you that lynch law is justifiable in most cases, consider an instance. We will suppose that one, two, three, or a party of men after the greatest hardships and perils succeed in penetrating an unknown and, to a great extent, uninhabited country. They have been obliged to pack, either on their backs or freighted in boats over rapids and other dangers, their six months' or more supply of foodstuffs, etc. These are hidden, stacked away, or, in the vernacular, "cached" at a base camp known to all. From this store the prospectors draw their needs when on their expeditions. The cache is unprotected. A thief in the shape of a man stumbles across these stores and deliberately steals the whole or a portion of them. The rightful owners return to find their means of sustenance, after all their hard work, gone. They are face to face with death in its worst form; therefore, if they can catch the thief, the penalty is death, and very justly so too. There is the exception to this rule, for I have purposely made use of the words *deliberately steals* a few lines previously. If a man who is himself

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starving happens on a cache of stores, then helps himself to what he absolutely requires for his necessities in order that he may have strength to regain some civilized spot, and provided that this man leaves a note signed with his name or otherwise describing his position, then, and only then may he be excused, for the pioneering fraternity are very fair and can easily imagine a similar situation for themselves. Therefore by common consent the man who thus helps himself is welcome to a moiety of the goods, and may, should he have the chance, repay his benefactors eventually by doing them, in his turn, some kindness. It must not be imagined that by saying a good word for the lynch law I in any way uphold those brutal crimes that we so often hear of as enacted in civilized America between the black and white races. I can in no way condone spite—for that is what it amounts to. I merely describe the working of a primitive law amongst men to whom such a law is a necessity, and as it has been expounded to me on various occasions by men who have been obliged to have recourse to it.

My destination was Tyonak, a small collection of native huts, a store run by the Alaskan Commercial Company, and one or more white men's shacks. On arrival at this place I landed, so soon as I could, my baggage, tents, rifles, and three dogs. I had brought the latter with me,

Tyonak

hoping they would be of use in "holding up" bears. After looking around I went into the store to ask if there was any sort of accommodation to be obtained, but was met with the reply, "I reckon not; you'll just have to camp on the beach." I therefore proceeded with Dawson's help to put up my tent, and to hang up my mosquito net inside, after which I sat down on the beach to determine what to do next. Close by were several men bringing planks of timber ashore from the steamer. One of them accosted me thus: "Say, will you give us a hand with this here lumber up the beach?" "Sure," I assented. I was going to give them a hand, for I had nothing particular to do, so I helped them to pack up that wood, which, it seemed, they meant to use for constructing two boats. I little thought at the time how these men would repay my efforts, but that is another story to be told later on. Anyhow, they seemed glad of the help, and offered to make Dawson and myself paying members of their mess, which we were glad enough to accept. They had quite a comfortable shack, to which they made me welcome during the few days I spent with them. These five men were drawn from all sorts and conditions. I got on excellently with them from the first. One was a broken-down doctor, who was exceedingly well informed and well read. Drink had evidently been his ruin,

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for the result of it was stamped all over his face, especially his nose; but he was a genial, kindly man, and we became quite friends. My great friend of the outfit, though, was the self-imposed cook. He was a bootmaker from Chicago—a little old man of quite sixty years of age, thin as a rail, but lively and cheerful withal. He told me all his history from “A” to “Z”; I almost knew his wife and family from having them described to me so minutely, but it pleased him to talk of his home, so I bore with it. One day early in our acquaintance he said, “I guess you hate cooking, Studley. I’m just glad to be able to help you, for I reckon you ain’t accustomed to it.” I told him I had been obliged to do my own cooking often enough, but loathed the job. He always gave me the tit-bits, so far as he was able, and treated me very kindly. On another occasion, apropos of nothing, he said, “I like you, you ain’t got none of them damned frills on. I always reckoned you Britishers were stuck-up chaps, but I guess I don’t know much about ’em.” I had to explain to him that a great many Englishmen had no reason to be “stuck-up,” as he termed it. Poor little chap! I took quite a fancy to this man. It was plucky of him to come up to such a country as this at his time of life in order to make money quickly for his wife and family. I inquired for him on my return to Tyonak,



MATSON'S SHACK

Jim Matson

some four months afterwards, and learnt that he had gone to Juneau very ill. I also inquired at this latter place when I arrived there, only to hear that he had died a month previously.

Now, there was at Tyonak an old chap called Captain Matson. He had built himself a very nice shack at the extreme end of the settlement. If you can imagine one of Fenimore Cooper's heroes suddenly endowed with life, you will be able to appreciate this man. He was immensely tall, six feet six at least—I felt quite a pigmy when standing alongside him with my puny six feet two inches. He was over seventy, he told me, but was not exactly sure of his age. He had spent the whole of his life in the woods as a frontiersman, and had been wounded seventeen times in various parts of his body, principally when fighting Indians. I happened on him one morning quite by chance, and we became great friends, for I could listen to his yarns by the hour, whilst they had every indication of the truth. If he took to you it was plain sailing, but he was an irascible old man, and was at daggers drawn with the manager or any one to do with the store at the other end of the village, swearing that owing to some grievance he would “shoot them dead” if they put their foot within a certain distance of his shack. He did me a very good turn, and was exceedingly kind to me later on.

On Dawson's advice I decided to go to Kusi-

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loff. There is a River Kusiloff also, thirty-five miles long, that rises from a lake of the same name at the foot of the mountains. The place was some twenty miles from Tyonak on the Kenai Peninsula. A large salmon-canning factory had been built at the mouth of the river, the manager of which was an American named Wetherbee. My reason for waiting a week at Tyonak was that I had no means of getting to Kusiloff. A small, wheezy steam tug of about eighty tons did the trip down the coast once a week, and I was obliged to wait for this old box. At last Dawson and I arrived at the cannery. I was tremendously keen to get into the country after sport, my expectations being wound up to concert pitch by the yarns spun to me by Dawson and many others. Wetherbee was not very gracious to me at first. I wanted to buy a boat from him, or, better still, to hire one, but he took up a most uncompromising attitude, probably owing to the fact that he had been bothered to death by various people with a similar request. I did not press the point, but took up my abode under an old shed that was not used, close to the beach, in which he said I might pitch my tent. I got Wetherbee to show me the cannery and explain the whole business to me, which he kindly did.

Until we became friends I did not again broach the question of the boat, which was



SALMON ARRIVING AT THE KUSILOFF WHARF

The Salmon-canning Industry

diplomatic, for he most good-naturedly lent me a big first-class boat a few days later. This, too, without my having to bother him by begging for it. I take this opportunity of thanking him most sincerely for his help and consideration, without which I should indeed have been beaten.

The salmon-canning industry fairly amazed me. Of course I had heard and read of the Fraser River canneries, but I could not believe salmon existed in such profusion. There are so many fish to be caught for the trouble of setting a net for them that not only do the Indians make them their staple food when fresh, and also when smoked and dried, but the dogs are fed on them. The actual work of a salmon cannery is performed by Chinamen. The custom is to employ a boss Chinaman, who engages a sufficient number of men to perform the necessary work, and who is responsible for the smooth working and satisfactory behaviour of those under him. In the Kusiloff Cannery which I will describe the *modus operandi* was somewhat as follows: A steamer leaves San Francisco in March for the site of the factory. She has on board the Chinamen and white men necessary for the works. She also carries a sufficient amount of tin plates that are to be used in making the cans for the purpose, together with stores, labels, etc. On arrival at the river, all hands are turned on to make the cans in

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preparation for the expected "run" of King Salmon, which starts about the middle of April. The fish arrive in myriads—that is the only word that expresses their numbers—it was quite a common sight to see as many as twenty thousand on the floor of the fish-house at one time. They are either caught in nets or seines, or in a trap built out from the bank of the river. The photographs reproduced speak more eloquently than any words of mine of the ease with which fish can be obtained. The small Indian boy sitting on the rail had merely a roughly made scoop net formed of galvanized wire-netting affixed to a pole which he placed on the bed of the river when the tide started to flood. In a few minutes a fish would hit it, when he lifted it up with a salmon kicking within.

I wanted to see what I could catch by myself, so borrowed a short length of four-inch-mesh net, some twenty yards long by one and a half fathoms deep. Even whilst I watched it after shooting this net the fish commenced striking, as was evidenced by the perpetual bobbing about of the corks. I hauled it ashore after it had been down not more than twenty minutes, and took out seven splendid fresh salmon, two of which were "humpbacks." The latter I returned to the river, as this variety is not used either in the canning operations or for edible purposes. If I wanted a salmon I had but to go to the fish-



INDIAN BOYS CATCHING SALMON

The Salmon-canning Industry

house and take one. One, or a dozen, would not be missed in that surfeit.

The salmon are brought from the nets or traps in lighters to the wharf. Here they are literally pitchforked into tubs, which are in turn hauled up by the aid of a derrick to the wharf, and then dumped into trucks that are waiting to receive them. The truck when full is pushed to the fish-house, where the fish are turned out on to the floor to await the actual process of canning. There are fish weighing from forty to twelve pounds; no one seems to care whether an extra big one is on the dump, but I could not help my thoughts wandering to rods and tackle, and wishing I could let some of those monsters put up a fight for their lives. The white residents in the district rarely eat salmon—there are too many of them, I suppose. If they do fancy this fish they cut out the belly portion only for consumption, as they say this is the fattest and choicest part. Wetherbee was, he told me, in the habit of salting in barrels the bellies of some of the fish, which he took back to San Francisco as presents for his friends.

The actual process of canning proceeds apace; every one is working at high pressure in order to dispose of this huge amount of fish. Two or more Chinamen stand at a table holding in their hands a fish each. With a dexterous blow of a knife they cut off the head, tail, and fins of the

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fish. They then with another blow slit open the fish and clean it. In this state another John takes the fish and presses it on to a drum, on the surface of which are a series of knives running round the whole circumference of the drum. This cuts the fish into six lumps, which in due course fall into a large trough on the far side of the operator. Here are more Chinamen, who have on their right hand a thick glove, made, I should say, of untanned leather. Here also is a huge stack of empty cans awaiting filling. One of these men takes a lump of fish, then a can, and with his gloved fist crams the tin full of flesh. So soon as this is accomplished the tin proceeds to another Chinaman, who puts a small round disc of tin, termed clips, about the size of a five-shilling piece, on to the top of the fish; the covers of the tins, which are made by machinery; are then fitted on automatically. The tins are now placed by other men in a slanting direction, and roll down an inclined plane over a bath containing "killed" spirits of salts. The salts only touch the tins at the point where the edge of the cover meets the body of the can, and this is necessary in order that the solder may adhere to the cover and can, and so make an air-tight joint. The solder is put on in a similar way. The cans are drawn onwards by an endless chain over a bath of liquid solder, which is kept at melting point by a



DUMPING SALMON FROM LIGHTERS INTO A TRUCK

The Salmon-canning Industry

furnace beneath the brickwork, and are hermetically sealed. Other Chinamen now take the cans and put them into trays, which are put into a steam-heated retort which holds thirty-two cases, of four dozen cans to a case. Here they remain for fifty-five minutes at a temperature of 228° F., which cooks the contents of the cans. They are then taken out and placed on a table in front of another Chinaman, who has in his hand a small wooden mallet with a small spike inserted in it. With this instrument he proceeds to knock a small hole in the top of each can, from out of which spurts a small jet of boiling water and steam. Another man follows immediately afterwards and re-seals these small holes with a hot iron and a stick of solder, the small round disc of tin previously mentioned preventing any of the solder falling on to the contents. The cans are gathered together once more in trays, and are subjected to the heat of another retort at a temperature of 242° F., and for eighty minutes. This completes the process of cooking. The cans are now scrubbed in a lye bath, and are then placed out of doors on a brick floor, where they are allowed to cool, cold water being sometimes thrown on them to hasten the process. This seems to be the critical time of the operation; for if everything has gone well the top of the can collapses with a report caused by the

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vacuum set up in cooling. You can hear them popping all around you by the dozen, yet the eagle-eye of John Chinaman sees a can the top of which remains convex instead of concave; this is put in the retort again until it performs its part satisfactorily. After the cans have cooled they are taken to a man in a long shed, who puts on the labels—I was going to say automatically, for he was almost more than human, the rate at which he pasted and stuck on the printed matter being extraordinary. He was surrounded by stacks of unlabelled cans. The pile by his side grew so rapidly that I think he astonished me by his activity more than all the rest of the processes put together, for he pasted labels at the rate of seventeen a minute, whilst I, unknown to him, timed him by my watch. There only remains to put the cans into cases for the operation to be complete. At Snug Harbour there lay a full-rigged sailing ship, which at the end of the short season was laden full up with the result of the catch. In this instance the cargo consisted of 36,500 cases; there were four dozen cans in a case, and each can contained one pound of salmon, or, roughly speaking, 1,752,000 pounds of fish altogether. This was the output of one cannery only; there were plenty more giving similar results. I could not help wondering if the fecundity of these salmon, enormous as it is, was sufficient to withstand this gigantic strain.

Mosquitoes

The Indians and local white men assert that the salmon never return to the sea after spawning, which I took leave to doubt. That many millions of the fish that go up to the spawning beds die is a proven fact, but if they all died, then the river would have been nearly choked with fish.

These rivers are, unfortunately, from a sporting point of view, useless, the water being white from the glacial waste. If they were but clean—well, I will not enlarge on the theme, but I think I should manage to spend a month or two there in that case, with my eighteen-foot greenheart, in the spring of each year. That would be delightful but for one thing, the mosquitoes—which make life in these regions a perfect curse. Nowhere else in all my wanderings have I seen, or rather felt, anything to compare with them for numbers and viciousness. It is impossible to live in a room in July unless you have an old piece of smouldering tarred sacking in the doorway, to make “a smudge,” as the locals have it. The moose and bears even come out on to the flats to get away from their attentions. My three dogs were so badly bitten that their noses and eyes were quite sore and raw from their attacks, whilst I found it impossible to go to the spring, which was situated just outside a belt of timber near my tent, without first putting on a veil and gloves to

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ward off their attacks. On the beach, where you caught what breeze there was stirring, life was more endurable, but Alaskan mosquitoes baffle description—I simply cannot do them justice. When they disappear—if they ever do—their place is taken by sandflies of sorts, the ordinary tiny black and white one and a red one. These, however, can be kept in some sort of bounds by smothering one's skin with a concoction of grease and penny-royal.

CHAPTER XIV

I engage a Guide—Kenai—Snug Harbour—Grizzly Bears—Mount Ilamina—Sea-otter Bows and Arrows—Bidarkis—Native Turkish Baths—Devout Indians—Curious Native Customs.

He rose to the occasion always with a smile.—MARCUS AURELIUS.

I WAS cooking my lonely meal one morning when a stranger came into camp. I asked him to sit down and have some food with me, and in the course of conversation he said he understood that I wanted to get up-country after sheep and moose, and that as he knew the Kenai Peninsula well, he would accompany me if I wished.

I was sure that Dawson, whom I had brought with me from Sitka, would not be able to make the trip on account of his frost-bitten feet, so after discussing terms I agreed to take this man. It was thus I met my friend William Hunter—and a truer, better companion no man could hope to meet. He was always cheery, always smiling, his only fault being, as I afterwards discovered, that he snored in his sleep. My patent whistle stopped this, however, until by arranging to sleep on his side instead of on his

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back he gave up the obnoxious habit altogether. I was now one step nearer my ambition. I soon discovered that Hunter was not a "blow-hard," and that I could depend upon what he told me. He was living at Kenai, a small village situated on a river of that name, seven or eight miles farther up the inlet. Here he had a wooden shack he had built for himself, and to which he now invited me, pending the making of our arrangements. Accordingly the next day, after saying good-bye to Mr. Wetherbee, we rowed the boat that this gentleman had lent me to this other river.

Now, the Indians in this locality are very devout members of the Greek Church. They are looked after by a Russian priest, who keeps them very much up to the mark. One of the principal feasts of the year was shortly to be observed, and both Hunter and I found it quite impossible to persuade any of the Indians to accompany us into the mountains until after they had observed the proper keeping of this time. We had over a month to wait, therefore we decided to cross the inlet and hunt for bears on the mainland in the neighbourhood of Snug Harbour. We were helped in our trip there by the captain of one of the Kusiloff Cannery tug-boats, who was going over to the depôt ship with a load of cased salmon, and who offered us a lift. We took our boat on

Grizzly Bears

board and enough stores to last us a fortnight. Unfortunately, we found on our arrival that two or three lots of prospectors had been out in this direction shortly before, looking for gold, a circumstance warranted to disturb the country from a sporting point of view.

The first day we pitched our tent at the mouth of Gleeson River. Here signs of grizzly bear were plentiful, one of the tracks which was quite fresh being enormous; it was in all probability the imprint of the foot of a big she-bear, for all round was the spoor of a smaller bear, a last year's cub. Bears must have been extremely numerous here shortly before my visit—it was Hunter's favourite place. The previous spring he had come over here and in a week shot seven big grizzlies, the recital of which fired me with envy. Bears come out of their dens in the early spring; at this time their coats are quite good, but a very little warm weather makes them shed their hair fast, so that the sooner you can get one after their first appearance the more likely are you to get a decent specimen. They come out on to the river flats in early spring to feed on the young grass, and it is then that you stand a good chance of obtaining a shot at one. The salmon too are running up the rivers, which is another attraction for Bruin.

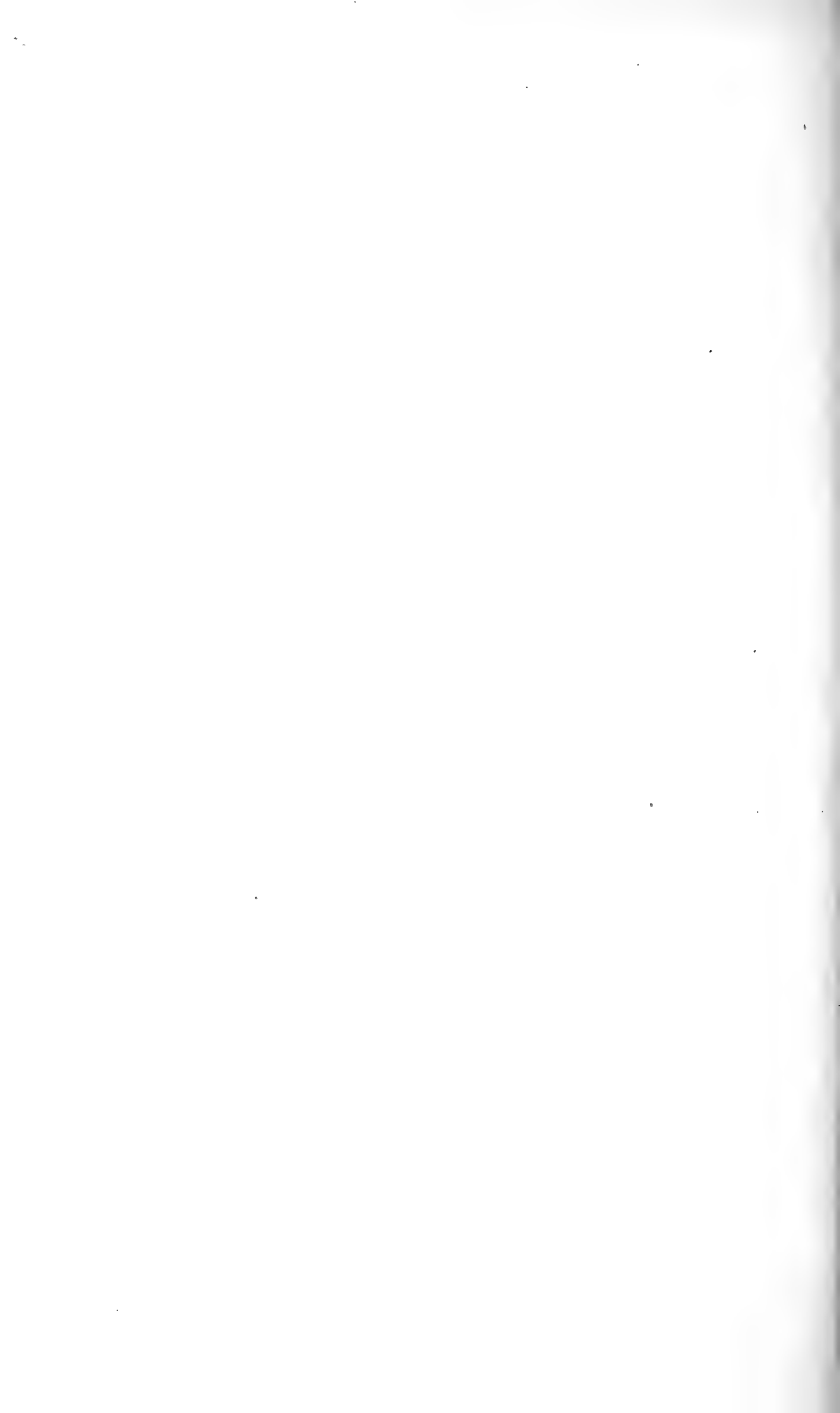
On the morning after our arrival I was stand-

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ing by my tent when I saw a bear walking up the beach towards me, but on the other side of the river—an accommodating beast, anyhow, to look me up in this way. On the bank of the river on my side was an old tree-stump that had been left high and dry by a previous flood. In a moment I had hidden myself behind this convenient shelter, awaiting developments. On came the bear, swinging along with a gait that rapidly brought him closer. When he was about eighty yards off he turned towards the sea in order to investigate a small and shallow arm of salt water which divided up the beach at this spot, and was simply alive with salmon that had mistaken this *cul-de-sac* for an opening to the river. The bear saw the fish too, or rather the ripples made by them, for he would dash into the water and strike at them with his fore-paw, sending up a cloud of spray in his endeavours to cuff a fish out on to the sand. I saw him make in this way three or four ineffectual attempts as the fish moved up in front of him. He put his ears back and galloped after them, then dashed into their midst again with another furious dig. All this time he was getting nearer and nearer to me, for this arm of the water tended towards my place of concealment. At length the bear gave up trying to get a fish, evidently recognizing the fact that the water was a little too deep for him to be successful. He now turned towards me



THE AUTHOR AND A GRIZZLY BEAR'S HEAD



Grizzly Bears

again, walking up the opposite bank. I had him covered with my .303, and as he got opposite me and within twenty yards' distance, I fired at his shoulder. With a grunt he acknowledged the hit, then spun round and round like a top. Suddenly he came a bit too close to the bank of the river, which being of sand gave way beneath his weight, and he toppled over into the stream, dead. Hunter, who had been watching the whole episode, now ran down, and together we entered the water, which, as it went over a sand bar, rapidly shallowed. We saw our bear rolling over and over in the current, which was running quite strongly. Dick, my dog, saw the dead beast and swam out to him, catching hold of his coat, but was obliged to leave go his hold as the body twisted round and round. Having run down the bank we entered the stream below so as to intercept our prize. As he passed me I caught hold of a hind leg, to be nearly pulled over by the weight, the water being nearly up to my waist. Dick, too, was in difficulties, and was being carried out to sea, when I called Hunter's attention. He gripped the dog whilst I steered the carcass of my bear towards them. Hunter got hold of the other leg, and together we managed to get the beast to the strand side, on which my tent was pitched. Here we had to skin him, for the body was too heavy to drag any distance up the sands. The coat was but an

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indifferent one, being very patchy. When we had finished this operation, Hunter cut off all four feet and took out the gall-bladder. I was curious to know what he wanted to save them for, and learnt that the Chinamen at the factory gave good money for them.

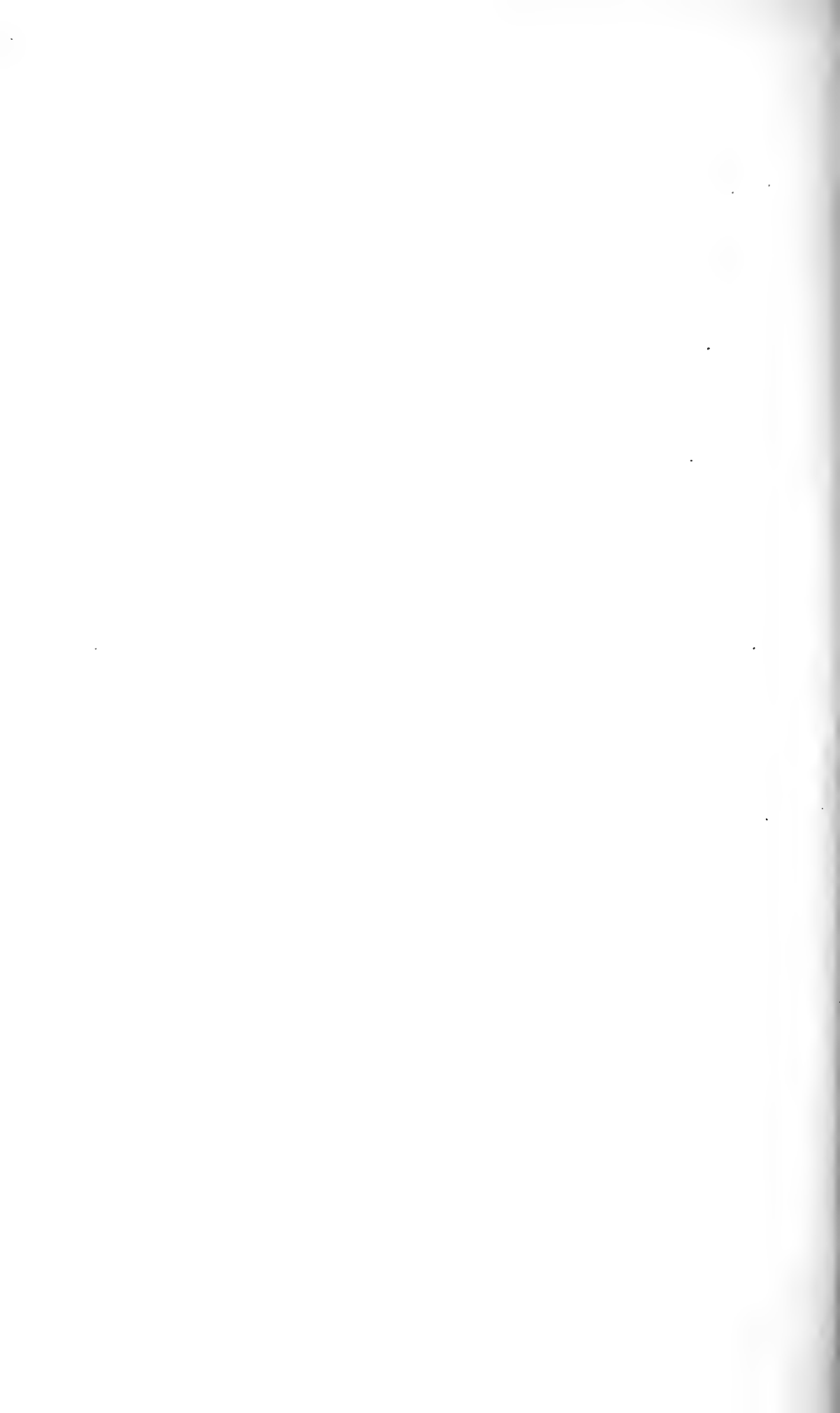
It was at this camp that I realized the value of my stove, for the weather was so shocking that we were in a perpetual state of being wet through. We could also do our cooking within the tent, which was a comfort.

There was a well-marked bear trail that crossed a wooded promontory of the land close to my camp, and the amount of spoor showed that it had been used quite lately. The claws on a grizzly bear's feet are quite three inches long, the marks left in a soft place showing up very distinctly, being quite different to those made by a black bear, whose claws are comparatively short, so that the difference in the tracks is easily distinguishable.

As we wanted to explore the head waters of this harbour, we decided to shift our camp. Early one morning, therefore, the rain having stopped for a few hours, we packed all our belongings into the boat and rowed some six miles up the shore. We were unfortunate in our choice of a site for camp, taking a grassy bank at the foot of a hill from which a small stream issued. The box containing all our food supplies we left outside



MY TENT AT SNUG HARBOUR



Grizzly Bears

the tent, taking nothing but the beds and stove within. Early next morning Hunter awoke me, saying, "I guess we are in for a mess," and no wonder, for the end of my bed was then lying in over an inch of water. As it was not quite light when we made this discovery, we were unable to tell exactly what damage was done, and had to wait with the best grace possible until we could see sufficiently well to find the boat. My long gum boots were luckily standing up—it was a marvel I had not pulled them off and allowed them to remain where they fell, in which case I should have been more uncomfortable still, if that were possible. Hunter informed me that the grub-box had gone, but the boat was all right. Now, the former was a hopeless disaster, for it contained all the food, tobacco, and matches we possessed—the loss of the boat would only have been one degree worse. I took my glasses, searching the whole flat, but could see nothing. It seems that the tide had been an abnormally high one, a fact that accounted for our being flooded out. We had to search for the grub-box, and entered the boat, proceeding towards the sea, when Hunter said, "What is that?" There, in the far distance, we espied an object which proved to be the truant box. It had the bear skin still covering it, and how it managed to float to so great a distance puzzled me. It rested on the only

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raised portion of the flat we could see for hundreds of yards around—a veritable miniature Ararat for us—for if it had not chanced on this spot of rising ground, it is certain we should never have seen it again. What a mess everything was in—sugar and tobacco spoiled, and all mixed up! But my guide did not know the word “defeat,” for after shifting camp to a drier spot, he proceeded to boil out the sugary mess until it would again crystallize, and we dried the sticks of tobacco in front of the fire. Of course the latter became untwisted, but that was a mere detail so long as it remained more or less what it was intended to represent, and we were too much elated over our lucky recovery of the box to be too particular as to appearances.

This camp was quite at the end of the harbour, and under the protection of Mount Ilamina, a volcano, from the sides and summit of which steam and smoke were perpetually issuing. I should have liked, had time permitted, to have made a voyage of discovery to this mountain and to have endeavoured to negotiate its ascent; the base could not have been more than five or six miles distant.

We spent the next day or so in the boat looking for bears on the grass slopes opposite my camp, but whether the salmon had proved an overpowering attraction, or we were a fortnight or so late in our search, we found no more



A CAMP AT SNUG HARBOUR

Mount Ilamina

bears—they had taken themselves off to the woods. We determined to have one more try on our way back to the ship in the harbour, and for this purpose camped in the prettiest place I ever pitched tent upon. It was on a high rock, flat on the top, and with a few trees and shrubs on it. We moored the boat to a tree before turning in that evening. What was our surprise next morning to find the boat perched up on some huge rocks; the tide had receded and left her very much high and dry, and it was impossible even to think of releasing her from this position. This tide must have been well on towards thirty feet in height, and we were obliged to remain for the better part of the day awaiting the incoming tide, should it be high enough to float the boat from off her perilous position.

On our return to Kenai we had not been in the house an hour when a Chinaman knocked at the door. This man spoke quite decent pidgin-English and answered my questions willingly. He had heard that we had shot a bear, and came to ask if Hunter would sell him the gall-bladder and feet. After considerable bartering, these treasures passed into the Chinaman's possession, the gall-bladder realizing one dollar and the four feet one dollar and fifty cents. The Chinaman told me that they soaked the feet in whisky (Chinese), when it became "heap good medicine," and the

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same thing applied to the gall. The sight of those four feet would have killed any one but a Celestial, for they had the appearance of hands. I felt that I should have to be extremely ill before I could be persuaded to cure myself in any way in which bear's feet took a part. Possibly "John" was right; he is found to be so more often than not, and seems to have forgotten more than most of the world knows!

I amused myself during our enforced wait for the Indians by collecting curios; some of these were very uncommon and were envied tremendously by a man who had been in this country some years, and collected such things. Amongst them were three bows and over two dozen arrows that the Indians used for shooting sea-otter. The bows are made of spruce, generally one of the thick roots of the tree being used for the purpose, nearly flat, but slightly convex on the outside. The string is formed from the large sinew taken from the back and neck of a caribou. Short lengths of this sinew are also used in lieu of cotton for sewing purposes; when dry it is quite easily split up into strands fine enough to go through the eye of a needle. The bows have to be soaked in water before using them, more especially if they have been put on one side for some months. This prevents their cracking. The quiver and arrows are interesting, the former being made out of two hollow pieces of wood



SEA-OTTER BOWS AND ARROWS

Bidarkis

bound together with sinew. The arrows, made of spruce, are thirty-four inches in length, the last six or seven inches being of walrus ivory, into the end of which a small barbed piece of ivory fits loosely ; this barb has attached to it a plaited length of sinew seventy-one inches long, which at three-fourths of its distance from the barb is divided into two and is attached to the shaft of the arrow twelve inches from the barbed end and ten inches from the notched end. When ready for use this plaited sinew is carefully wound in a peculiar manner round the shaft of the arrow, the barb being inserted in the ivory end. The three strips of feathers are tied on. These arrows when used are not fired directly at the sea-otter, but into the air, so that the barb may more easily penetrate the skin. The sea-otters are hunted by the Indians in "bidarkis," a form of canoe, the ribs and woodwork of which are made of the ever-handy and useful spruce, walrus hide being used as a covering for deck and sides. They are constructed to hold two or three, and are consequently termed two or three-hole bidarkis. In the case of one of the latter the front man does the paddling, the centre man also assisting, whilst the third man in the stern does the steering, and is the best shot of the party. Schooners are employed by white men in hunting the sea-otter, and these boats carry five or six bidarkis, with their native crews

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on board. When an otter is sighted the greatest rivalry is manifested by these men, for the money prize offered by the captain of the schooner falls to the crew of the bidarka which first scores a hit with an arrow. Now, a sea-otter differs from a seal when in the water in this important particular, that it dives in one direction, coming up again to breathe at intervals in the same line more or less, whereas a seal is as likely to come up behind or at right angles to its pursuer's course. We will suppose that an otter has been sighted, the different bidarkis launched in pursuit, each racing to get near enough for a shot. When this is accomplished the two front men attend to the manœuvring of the canoe, whilst the third man shoots his arrows. The otter appears one hundred yards ahead, the archer shoots his arrow into the air so that in falling it hits the beast or water; in its parabolic flight. In the event of a hit the ivory barb penetrates the otter's skin, which is loose and baggy. The beast dives, and at the same time the barb comes out of the hole in the shaft, and the harness with which it is attached to the shaft of the arrow unwinds itself. The otter has therefore to drag the arrow through the water crossways; if it comes to the surface for a moment, the shaft of the arrow, owing to the ivory end, appears feathered end up above the surface; this goes on until the beast is so

Bidarkis

fatigued that it can be knocked on the head and so secured. This was the old and original way of hunting these animals. I understand now, however, that this ingenious but primitive method has been superseded by shooting the animals with rifles. In any case the poor brutes have been so persecuted that it is only a question of a few years, unless they are most stringently protected, before they are doomed to complete extinction. The bows and arrows, therefore, have a considerable interest in themselves, and the Indians, I was told, would not part with them under any circumstances. However, the chief, who lived near Kenai, sold me all he owned himself and others he collected for me for one dollar each, and as I understood that this sum or its equivalent was paid by the users to the expert Indians who made them, my obtaining them at this price was somewhat of a bargain.

The bidarkis are wonderful boats; they weigh, when empty, about forty pounds, and will carry quite a lot of stuff stowed away between decks, in addition to the crew. Each man is provided with a waterproof jacket and hood in one piece, a sample of which I was fortunate enough to obtain; when in use it is tied with a draw-string beneath the chin, around the wrists, and around the wooden ring which surrounds each of the holes in the deck of the boat in which the men sit. These jackets are called "kamalinkas," and

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are made from the large intestine of the grizzly bear, the edges sewn together. When dry they are hard and harsh to the touch, but when wetted they become as soft as silk and fit tightly to the person. Dressed in this kit the natives do not hesitate to negotiate large seas, going straight through them, if necessary, without a drop of water entering the canoe, which is extremely delicate to handle, as it draws but an inch or so of water. It is another case of parting your hair down the centre to prevent a capsize. I obtained from this same chief a hat that was made from the smallest split-up fibres or roots of the spruce. It is a perfect marvel of workmanship and must have taken ages to make. It is ornamented with small, round, scimitar-shaped white shells, but I was unable to discover whether these were taken from fresh or sea water.

These Indians are great snuff-takers. The tobacco they buy at the stores, black though it be, is evidently not pungent enough for their vitiated tastes, so they have recourse to mixing it with a yellowish white fungus gathered from the birch trees, dried and pounded up together with the tobacco in a wooden mortar. Each hut or house I entered possessed one of these mortars; they are rather unwieldy to carry about, being sometimes formed from a log. The specimen I own is comparatively small, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

Native Turkish Baths

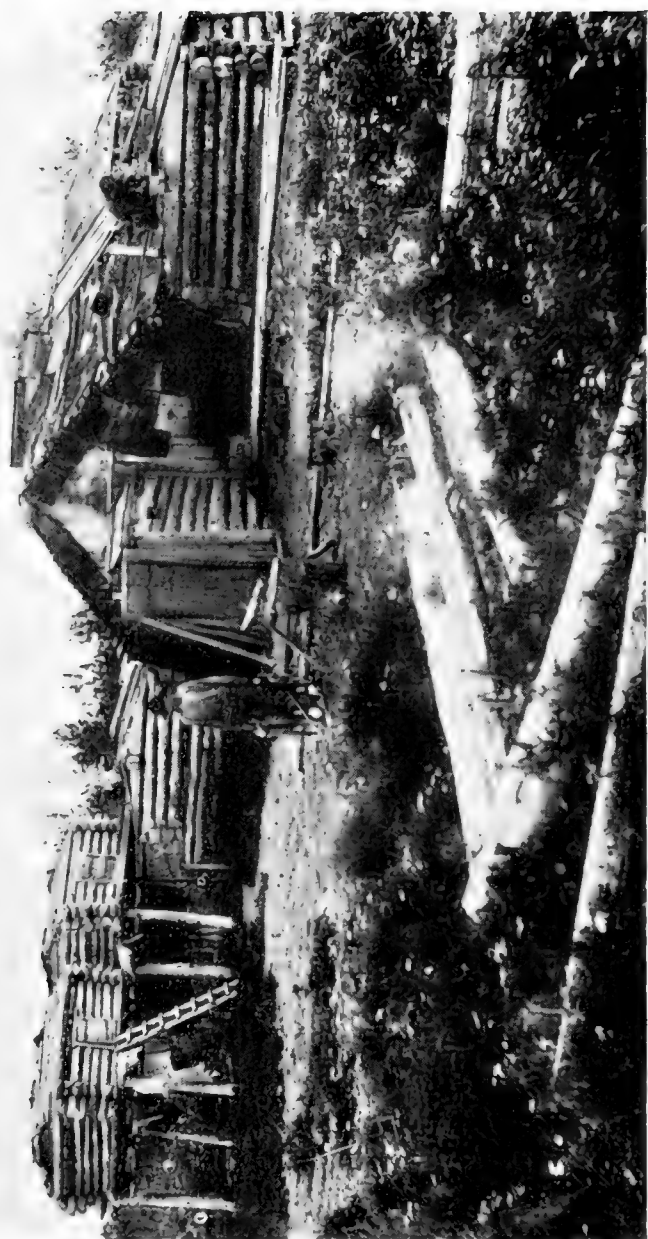
The Russians, who owned Alaska before they sold the country to America, introduced amongst other things the steam bath. Some of the native huts or houses have an annexe built out from the shack proper, where such a bath can be indulged in. The one I tried was not much larger than a big dog-kennel, so low at the opposite side to that on which the wall of the house made another side, that I could only manage to sit upright on the floor with difficulty on account of the rafters hitting me on the head. The method of heating this structure was primitive but effective. One or more huge stones were put on the house fire until they were white hot ; they were then picked up by a squaw with a pair of wooden tongs and deposited in a corner of the sweat-house, where they made a glowing heat. A bucket of water was provided, in which a bunch of tied-up birch twigs was placed. You undressed in the house, which the occupants were good enough to vacate for that purpose ; and then crawled into the dog-kennel through a square hole, which you covered up with a board after entering. Then you sprinkled the stones with water from the bucket. Heat ! That promised to cook me rapidly, the steam nearly took my breath away, and I had to lie down flat on my back to endure it at all ; but the purpose for which I entered the place was—I can vouch for this—satisfactory. I emerged in about ten minutes feeling more like

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wet blotting-paper than any other simile I can suggest.

It seems these people had never tried a cold water plunge after the bath before I showed them how to manage it. On this occasion the hut was built all by itself at a spot where the Kenai River issues from the lake. The Indians were in the habit of having a hot bath when they paid their rare visits to this district. I pitched my camp alongside after my six days' hard work ascending this river, and as my Indians had heated the house preparatory to having a bath themselves, I decided to go first. The experience was similar to that already described, except that on emerging I at once ran down and plunged into the icy cold river. The boys thought I had gone mad, I think, for their faces were a study ; but I persuaded Elia and Shanghai, two of the three boys I then had with me, to experience the plunge. Probably it has now caught on and become a practice, due, I flatter myself, to my initiative. In any case it was an innovation that would do them more good than harm, for after emerging from such a furnace the probabilities were they stood about in the cold and caught dangerous chills.

The end to our waiting on "Prasnic" at length arrived, and so did a Russian bishop of sorts, whose diocese must embrace many hundreds of miles of coast-line. He arrived in a boat and was received by our padre. All the Indians who



INDIAN SHACKS AT KENAI

Devout Indians

possessed fire-arms lined the cliffs and fired salutes into the air. This was much more like business, for we were getting to work. My friendly chief was specially devout, the priest had the "length of his foot" to a nicety. He went to Mass three times a day for the whole of that week, and every time he passed our shack had his pockets stuffed full of tallow dips which had presumably cost him good money. Perhaps that is why he sold me the bows and arrows, etc. Anyhow the whole native community were extremely devout; I have never seen anything quite like the sincerity displayed, which made quite an impression on me. Money would not have made the men false to their faith, for to my shame I admit trying to get them to start on my trip with me. Had I imagined that the proceedings had such a hold on them, I, of course, would not have attempted to persuade them to violate their principles, but as I explained to "His Riverince" afterwards, my efforts only showed how deeply in earnest they were. Whether it was the result of this priest's individuality or of the religion he preached, I am unable to say, but the result was extremely good, for a better lot of natives I have never come across, honest, hard-working, and good fellows, and the priest may well be proud of his flock.

Whilst on the subject of the natives I met, I may mention a curious custom that I noticed

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amongst my own men. When Shanghai washed his face and hands, he took from a cup a mouthful of water, which he then blew as spray into his upturned hands, and which he then applied to his face and neck. I noticed him cleaning some herbs that he brought to apply to my knee as a fomentation after an accident in a similar manner. This habit is the more curious from the abundance of water to be found everywhere, and I am at a loss to account for the reason of it.

A very amusing episode happened during this Prasnic week, which still causes me amusement when I think of it. An American and his outfit, who were on some Government surveying business, had their camp on the cliffs some four hundred yards from our shack. Hunter owned a native dog, which are locally called " huskies " ; it was but a puppy, perhaps a year old, but these dogs are snarling thieves, and are of every sort and description of colour. They are in size and shape similar to a Chinese chow dog, but the hair of their coats is not so long ; they carry their tails, though, in a similar fashion. One day the American sent down word to Hunter that this dog would come to his camp and steal his bacon. The pup was hard to deal with, for he would not make friends easily, in fact Hunter and I were the only people he would condescend to notice. I offered to go up and see what the trouble was, fearing that the irate Yankee might

Curious Native Customs

shoot the dog. On arriving at the tent I discussed the question with the man, but did not at once notice that the dog had followed me. When I discovered the fact, I told the man to tie an empty can to a piece of string whilst I caught the dog. This done, I tied the string to the pup's tail. The man shouted at—shall I say both of us? for his shriek nearly made *me* jump a yard, but the effect on the dog was simply magnetic, for away he tore, with the empty can banging and hurtling behind him, straight back to the house. Unfortunately for the dog's peace of mind—or piece of tail?—he passed too close to a post that was a fixture in the path. The tin violently hit this, which frightened the poor brute more than ever: he made one wild dash for the dog-kennel and curled up within it, tin and all. A movement, and the tin rattled! Like lightning out he rushed round the house twice. Hunter, who had opened the door to see what the commotion was about, gave the pup his chance to rush into the house and lie down, panting, under my bed. I coaxed him out and took off the string. He was a very chastened little dog after that. The experience did him no harm, but never again would he venture within yards of the Yankee's tent. He put the trick down to the man with the shriek, whereas he should have given my brutal self the credit for the fright.

CHAPTER XV

Leave Kenai for the Lake—Wild Berries—Dawson's Hut—
Blazing a Trail—White Sheep—Bear Trails—Sand-hill Cranes
—My first Moose—Fox Farms—The Lone Trail.

The trails of the world be countless, and most of the trails be tried ;
You tread on the heels of the many, till you come where the ways
divide.

R. W. SERVICE.

AT last we got away. Hunter was doubtful if we should get up the river at all, as, owing to the heavy rainfall, it had become in a chronic state of flood. The method we adopted was to tow the boats with a long rope, the Indians keeping to the shallows and the bits of stony strand. I had engaged eight Indians to accompany me to the lake, if I could get there, five of whom I then proposed to send back, keeping three with me. The big boat Wetherbee had provided was packed a day or so in advance, and there remained but Hunter's own small craft and the two bidarkis to see to, and we could start immediately.

This Kenai River is about sixty miles long, and for the first seven or eight miles of the

Leave Kenai for the Lake

estuary very broad, especially at the flood tides, of which we took advantage.

The boys rowed the first part of the journey until we got into shallow water, when we used poles. Thus the first day. And at night we pitched camp some fourteen miles away from the village at the river's mouth. An early start was made next morning, and I think perhaps it may have some interest for the uninitiated if I describe in detail the exact methods by which we negotiated the difficult water.

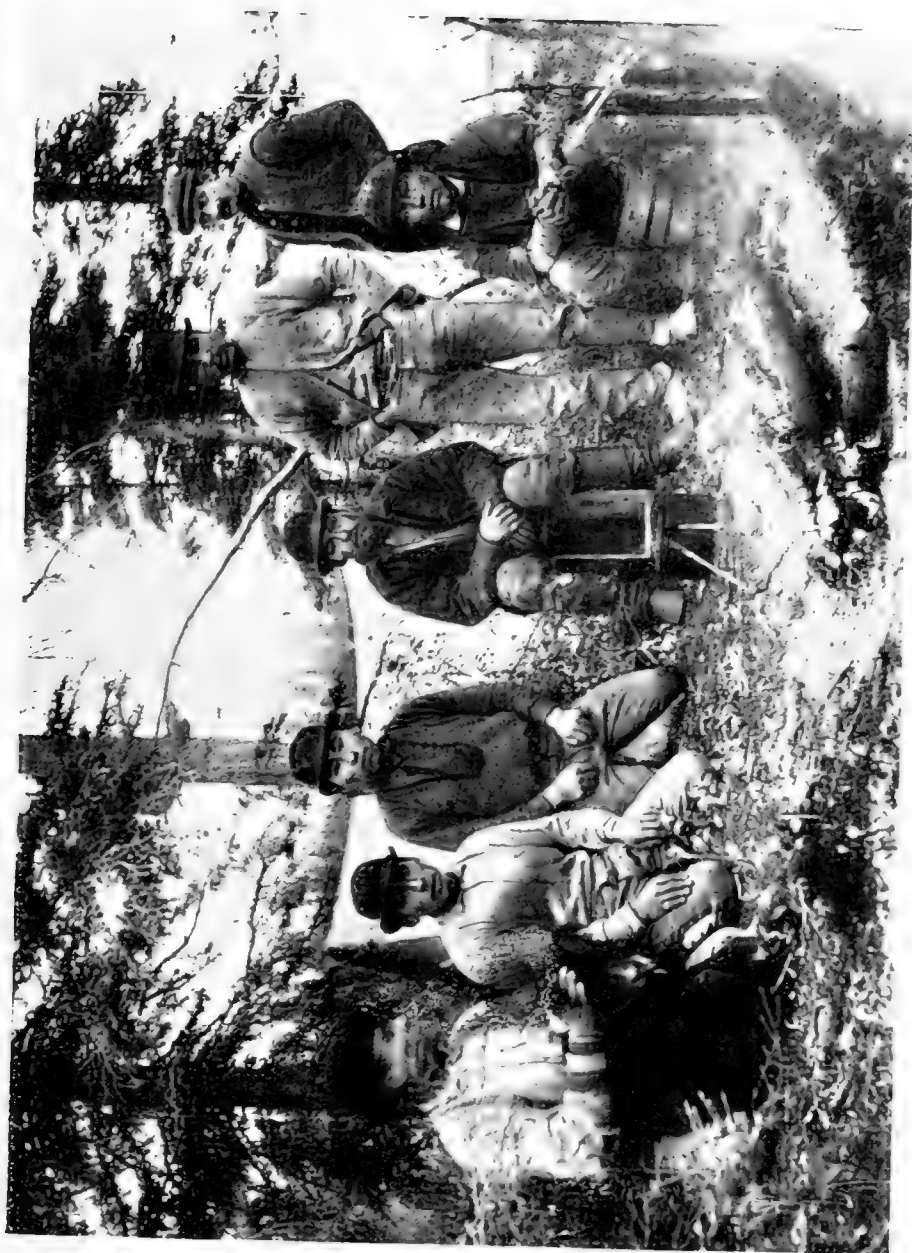
To the very heavy and large boat a tow-rope one hundred yards long was affixed by means of the ring in the bows, and at about thirty feet distance on this rope, measured from the bow of the boat, we placed a light rope by a rolling hitch. I remained in the boat, because a great part of the hauling depended on my efforts. The boys manned the rope, one behind the other, and then went forward with the rope over their shoulders. Splendid! But in a very short time they were held up by a fallen tree, whose branches and tops stretched far out over the stream. The boys got round the obstacle, and passed the rope through the branches as close to the river as possible, and then they hauled. This is where I came in. If the boat were hauled straight it would crash into the fallen tree. So, taking the light rope, I passed the end through one of the holes carrying the thole pins on the side of

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the boat nearest the bank we were ascending. Then I pulled with all my weight to turn the bow across stream, and at the same moment the boys on the bank hauled for all they were worth, which strain broke out the rope from the tree it had fouled. This accomplished, I slackened up my short rope in the boat, thus allowing her head to turn once more to the bank, when she was again hauled along until held up once more by some other obstacle.

Under such conditions the journey took us five and a half days ; we had rocks and rapids innumerable to negotiate, and very often anxious, exciting work. At last the lake and the Indian house. The tow-rope showed the hard usage to which it had been subjected : it was worn out, and useless. But without it the ascent of the river would have been impossible. My ribs also showed signs of wear and tear, many bruises in blue showing where the short rope had caught me when hauling on it, for I had constantly taken a turn round my body and then round the thwarts in order to get more purchase.

Early next morning we started to row across the lake to a shack that Dawson had built a year before. The scenery was magnificent, mountains and glaciers coming right down to the lake. The distance we had to go was about three miles, a stiff pull, for there was a strong head wind blowing, and, in consequence, quite a big



HUNTER AND MY INDIANS

Wild Berries

sea. At length we reached a small bay, where we beached the boats and unloaded them, and took the contents into the hut. The two boats were now hauled high and dry, and turned over bottom up amongst the bush to protect them until we required them for our return journey. The rest of the day was spent in getting ready the loads.

Just outside the hut were enormous quantities of dwarf cranberries, and it was not long before two of the boys had collected enough to make a splendid feed for all hands. When stewed, with a small amount of unsweetened canned milk added to them, these berries make a dish fit for the gods, which was especially welcome at this time, owing to the fact that we had been living for the last week on bacon and beans, a very excellent dish in its way, but one that I was apt to get tired of. These berries flourish everywhere, and I feel sure they would do excellently well in our woods at home, growing as they do under the bushes and trees. The plant is very dwarf, being not more than three inches high, and must not be confounded with the tall cranberry, a bush that grows quite two feet in height, the berries of which are much lighter in colour and far more acid to the taste. Whilst on the subject of berries, I may mention the blue, or bilberry, that is common in the moorland districts of England, Scotland, and Ireland,

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as being very plentiful in this part of Alaska. There is also the salmon berry, which grows on long canes, with fruit like a yellow raspberry, but of a more watery flavour. The bears eat enormous quantities of this berry, and their trails can be seen wherever the plant flourishes. They put one paw on the canes to break them down, then pick off the fruit when thus levelled to the ground. There is still another berry that is very prolific, and which would, I feel sure, do well in Scotland, the snowberry, which grows close to the ground, and is simply smothered with tiny black fruit—the taste is somewhat sweet and very watery. I tried the experiment one day, when amongst a patch of this fruit, of shutting my eyes and taking a handful at random. I got quite a nice mouthful, but my fist contained a good deal of the green part of the plant, which is not unlike a heather in appearance, and which, of course, I had to pick out before I ate any. This snowberry I found to be the nicest possible thing to eat when I was thirsty, as it quenched my thirst splendidly.

The following morning after our arrival at Dawson's I sent back to Kenai six of the boys who had accompanied us thus far; they used the two bidarkis we had towed up with us for this purpose. The trip would only take them some seven hours to accomplish, as the stream was strong, and the boys were expert paddlers.

Dawson's Hut

After seeing what stores we left in Dawson's hut hung by cords from the roof to prevent their being attacked by mice, plenty of which seemed to be living in the hut, we shouldered our packs and started for Moose Camp, which Hunter said was about eight miles distant. The way at first was directly uphill—a sharp incline for half a mile. This was a bit trying for a commencement, but it was better than if we had to negotiate the climb at the end of the march. Hunter led the way, for he alone knew the trail. He had blazed a path the previous year, but we found that the axe-marks were often hard to pick up, having become obliterated. We therefore re-blazed the trail as we proceeded. This is accomplished in the following manner: A point is taken that you can make for, and as you pass various trees on the journey you hack off a slice of bark from each, pointing to the way you have come from; whilst on the other side of the tree you slice off another lump in the direction you propose to take. If the trail turns to the right hand, the slice is taken from off that side of the tree; the same with the left-hand or straight ahead. The only difference to be observed is when you leave a wooded country and have to cross an open space. Where you leave the woods you make several blazes on surrounding trees, doing the same on re-entering the woods farther on, as they are thus more easily seen. Another

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sign of the trail is to break a twig off and leave it hanging in the direction in which you propose to proceed. This is a trick which soon develops into a habit for those whose business takes them much into a wooded country.

The way was still uphill but the incline gentle, for which I was duly thankful, as my load began to feel uncomfortably heavy. I was carrying about forty-five pounds—a trifle compared to Elia's and Shanghai's loads, which must have been eighty pounds each. Hunter, too, had much more than I had, but he stuck to it like wax.

We were approaching the edge of the timber line, where moose paths were quite common, and seemed to be much used. Once we came upon a party of moose, but they crashed away through the brush without giving us a sight of them, much less a shot. At last we reached the camp, situated close to the edge of the timber, and on a small stream that came from the mountains. Hunter called my attention to a bag of flour which he had cached in the limb of a tree two autumns ago, and which was still there. We opened it to see how the flour had withstood the rain and exposure, and I was surprised to find it good enough. The outsides and top, where the rain had penetrated, had formed into a hard crust which practically sealed up the remainder of the contents of the bag. We had plenty of

White Sheep

flour with us, so returned the bag to its resting-place in the fork of the tree, where it probably remains to this day, unless Hunter has himself removed it.

In front of my camp the country sloped gently to a large plateau covered with timber, which, however, had been burnt some years previously. The white sticks looked very uncanny. There were in places large spaces that were nearly impassable, owing to the fallen trees piled up one on the other. If a breeze blew I could hear these trees come crashing to the ground, and it was needful to observe caution when passing through this particular belt.

On the morning after our arrival Hunter and I went up the mountains to view the situation. We saw no moose—the time was yet early, for they had only just commenced to rub their horns free from the velvet, and had not yet started “running.” We decided, therefore, to go and look for the sheep, “*Ovis Dalli*,” which were to be found in the mountains eight or nine miles farther inland.

It was during this day that we were unfortunate enough to lose our one and only frying-pan. When we discovered the loss we retraced our steps to look for the treasure, but we might as well have looked for the proverbial needle.

We had a delightful walk, barring the load I

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carried, on the open mountain side. Bear tracks were everywhere to be seen. They passed principally from berry patch to berry patch, and here the big beasts had evidently enjoyed their feed. The tracks were in places much worn. For countless years the bears and their ancestors had made use of these same trails, so that where their feet touched the ground the place had been worn down to the bare earth. I paced many of these footprints, and found that I had to stride my very utmost to plant my foot from one track to another. As I stand six feet two inches high, and cover while thus extended a stride from heel to heel of perhaps fifty inches, the ordinary gait of one of these brown bears can easily be imagined.

We soon came to a stream, at the head of which I was told we were to camp, as the sheep mountains surrounded us. The only difficulty we were likely to experience was in not being able to get sufficient firewood. After following this creek for two or more miles, we found two solitary pine trees close together, under whose shelter we decided to spend the night without the tent. Early in the afternoon, after having had something to eat, I took my glasses to spy the mountains nearest to me—no need to use glasses, for there, high above us, I saw two white spots which I decided to investigate by myself. I wanted fresh meat badly, bacon and beans

White Sheep

being all very well ! I made a big detour and reached the top of the mountain, which may have been two thousand feet high at its summit. Arrived, I carefully looked down the hill, and saw my quarry lying down two hundred yards away to my left. I stalked those sheep so carefully that I gained a spot within sixty yards of them. I knew that one beast was a ewe from the commencement, and that she had a lamb with her ; but this did not deter me from my effort to kill her, for these sheep had never been brought to Europe, or to Canada, for the matter of that, and I proposed to kill three ewes if possible, and save their whole skins to present to different museums. I rolled a small stone down the hill : it was but a pebble, but had the desired effect of bringing the sheep to her feet, when I killed her with a bullet through her shoulder, and she fell dead to the shot. The lamb I killed for meat principally, but also because I knew it would not live without its dam. Now, the question arose, how to get the beasts back to camp ; the distance was nothing, not more than a mile as the crow flies, but the ground was very stony and rough. I settled the matter by galloching the ewe, and swinging her on to my shoulder, carrying my rifle and the lamb in my free hand. The load nearly took charge of me once or twice, but after a somewhat arduous descent I successfully arrived

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with my prize in camp, where I occupied myself in skinning out the whole sheep. This took me quite a long time, as it had to be done very carefully if the specimen was eventually to be mounted whole. It was dark when I had finished.

I put down a leg of the mutton before the fire to cook. Hunter was away, and so were the boys, but the former turned up shortly after dark, bringing with him a very nice ram's head he had shot on the mountain opposite to mine. He told me he had sent Elia and Shanghai back to the lake to bring up more supplies and one or two things we had forgotten. I thought this rather a tall order after the six or seven miles we had already done that day, but he laughed and said they preferred to go at once—it was all downhill!—and that they could, by taking a short cut, make the lake in about twelve miles, sleep in the hut, and rejoin us on the morrow. This was all right, but in the morning we were awakened by a drizzling rain, which prompted us to put up the tent hurriedly, not before it was necessary, for we had a sample of a Scotch mist throughout that day which kept us willing prisoners in camp. Towards night the boys not having turned up, I thought something had gone wrong with them, that they had lost their way, perhaps, in the mist, and might have to spend the night out in the open. It was nearly nine o'clock and still no signs of them, so I fired a shot into the air.

White Sheep

Not having an answer to this in the course of half an hour, I fired another shot, and this time a rifle report rang out away down the creek. I had meanwhile got ready some ribs and a haunch of mutton with which to feed up my hungry Indians, whilst Hunter had made a plentiful supply of tea and bread for them also. At last they turned up wet through to the skin—their canvas clothes simply oozed water. They had brought up tremendous loads each, but they seemed as happy as crickets and none the worse. They fairly amazed me. I can picture Shanghai now as he stood in front of the roaring camp fire with the steam coming from his clothes so densely that you could barely see him. I waited on them, and saw that they had as much as ever they could eat, and they did credit to my cooking powers by demolishing every particle of the mutton, besides bread galore and tea *ad libitum* ! They had a smoke, then turned into their blankets wet through as they were. I thought it would have killed them, but next morning they got up, it is true somewhat later than usual, for Hunter and I had finished our breakfast, and when they stood up in front of the fire the steam arose in dense clouds from their clothes just as it did the previous evening, in fact, they did not change their clothes at all, but simply let them dry on them. No wonder these men take a sweat bath every now and



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again—it must be a sheer necessity, unless they are content to be racked with rheumatism and such-like ills. I saw Hunter try on the same game one evening later on, but I abused him so roundly that he did have the decency to get out of his wet things and have them dried.

The next day we moved camp to the foot of the mountains, a distance of perhaps three miles. Here I made a permanent camp during the time that we meant to hunt sheep. The only drawback to this site was due to the fact that firewood was very scarce, and we had to depend upon the limited number of black alder bushes growing in the vicinity, and these we had to use very carefully.

I took Shanghai with me and proceeded half a mile up the valley between the two mountains that hemmed in my camp on one side, to look for signs of sheep, and had barely gone three hundred yards when I saw two rams feeding peacefully on my left, within two hundred yards of me. They had not seen us as we were about to round a small bend in the valley and were going very cautiously lest any game might be near. We were lucky in being able to see them first, especially as the sheep were above us on the side of the hill. I had in my pocket a supply of very light down that I had plucked from a wild plant that grew in the marshy places I had passed through, and particles of this I now used

White Sheep

to test the wind, which I fancied would be very shifty. There was on my left a small water-course which came down the mountain side, and which I took advantage of to get on a higher level than the rams I sought ; on my right was a sharply defined ridge of shale and stones, which presently I carefully ascended. I tried the air here with some of the down, and was horrified to find that what little wind there was apparently blew directly from my position to that of the sheep. I had not even looked over the top of the ridge, tossing the down into the air, so I was still unaware whether the game had winded me or not. I was determined to get high enough before attempting to spy the ground, so to this end continued my climb quite another eighty yards. I then had to leave the creek bed, as it turned away from the direction I wished to go. There was nothing left now but to approach the top of the ridge again. I tested the air once more, and was agreeably surprised to find that this time it blew straight up the face of the hill. Now I ventured to peer over the edge—there were the sheep peacefully feeding on the edge of a deep depression in the ground. I used my glasses and saw that they were two nice rams ; with good heads turned away from me as they continued to feed into the hollow. Now the critical part of the stalk had to come, namely the crawl over the ledge of

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shale that separated me from the sheep, on the one hand, and some rocks about fifty yards away, downhill of my position. I therefore left Shanghai behind and cautioned him not to move his head a fraction if he must look on at the stalk, which I felt he would be compelled to do. I then lost no time in sliding down over the ridge whilst the sheep were headed away from me. It was anxious work, for I was in plain view of them all the time. After ten minutes I was nearly safe, when one sheep looked up, searching the valley below him with those quick eyes of his, whilst I hardly dare breathe lest he should see the strange object above him; but he went on feeding again, with his head now turned three parts towards me. The few yards I had to go seemed to take ages, for I went but an inch or so at a time until I was out of sight. I rested now for a few minutes before resuming the stalk, and turned round to look at the ridge, to see if Shanghai had put his head in evidence, and was relieved to find that I could see nothing of him, but was well aware that a pair of very sharp and interested eyes were watching my every movement. The going was now good, plenty of big rocks were scattered around, so I started downhill directly towards the sheep, moving up the opposite slope to that I had come down so precariously. After a short time I began to crawl on my hands and knees, and at last was on

White Sheep

the top of a second ridge. Before looking over I again tried the wind, and was pleased to find that it blew straight in my face. I ventured to look into the hollow below, but took the precaution of doing so from behind a piece of shale. There were the sheep, a little lower in the hollow, but in practically the same position as when I last saw them, now within sixty yards of me. I decided to take the one facing the valley, hoping that the other, on hearing the shot, would not move far, or until I had managed to get in a shot at him too. Pushing my double .303 over the ledge, I took a fine sight behind the shoulder of the beast I had decided on, and pressed the trigger. The bullet went true, and the ram fell dead to the shot, the other jumping several feet, but stopping broadside on to me to see what was up. This was fatal for him ; for I put the bullet from the second barrel into the centre of his shoulder-blade, which effectually settled him also. It was not many minutes before I was rejoined by Shanghai, who was delighted.

These grand sheep were indeed prizes to be proud of, for their heads were perfect specimens, being quite up to, if not above, the average for the species, whilst their coats were as white as the snow, with no suggestion of yellow hair in them. I wanted to get those two skins off whole, so I started on one myself, intending to let Shanghai finish it. This I proceeded to do, and

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had half skinned the second one when I had to stop owing to its becoming too dark to see properly. Shanghai helped me, therefore, to get this second ram into the valley, which was not more than eighty yards away. Now, there is a sort of green, slimy moss that grows on these mountains which when trodden on, especially when wearing mocassins, is as slippery as ice—slippery is hardly the word to convey my meaning, for the moss makes the ground more of a greasy or soapy nature; anyhow, it was slippery enough in the dark to give me a bad toss, and in falling I had the misfortune to hit the cap of my left knee on a sharp point of rock. This hurt most frightfully, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I managed with Shanghai's help to crawl the short distance back to camp. I got there at last, and promptly made some bandages of an old flour sack, which I tore up and sewed together. My knee had now swollen considerably. Hunter bathed the place with hot water, and then I made a saturated solution of salt and water, which I applied to the bandages. Shanghai and Elia went out and brought in the two sheepskins and some of the meat, the rest following next morning. I was now *hors de combat* for two days. Had I attempted to walk I should probably have been laid up for weeks with inflammation of the knee-joint—I therefore had to endure it. Hunter went out



WHITE SHEEP
Ovis Dalli

Sand-hill Cranes

and killed three more rams, and another ewe, for me whilst I lay at the door of the tent bemoaning my luck. I was interested, though, for I saw a curious sight that appealed to me. It was about midday on the day succeeding my accident, and I had by my side my compass, with which I had been locating our position, which was in a sort of basin whence radiated four valleys. The air was still, and it was a lovely day. Suddenly I heard a great "honking," as from a gaggle of geese on passage, but I could in no direction locate the sound. After some minutes I saw the cause—a great flight of sand-hill cranes were migrating. They came down the valley from the north, and on arriving at the basin where my camp was pitched the noise stopped. One bird that led the van spoke as he piloted them round the basin at least four times, flying very high, and then with a final croak led off his followers by the outlet bearing due south. Several flocks appeared at intervals during the two days I was laid up. It was perfectly evident to me that on arriving at this particular place some old bird of the lot, who knew his way about, was showing the birds of the year some of his landmarks that would enable them to find their way for the future. Had such a thing happened once I should probably have taken no notice of it, but when it was repeated exactly in the same manner by some ten, or more, separate parties,

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then I had to admit that this was no coincidence, but part of an organized action of the southward migration from their breeding grounds in the far north.

I could just manage to hobble about a little on the third day, and was preparing to go out for a short turn, thinking that the exercise might take the stiffness from my knee-joint, when Hunter saw a bull moose approaching camp from the valley where I had killed the sheep. This beast had not a big head, but he was the first I had ever seen in Alaska. If he continued on the same course as he now held, he would pass within sixty yards of my tent. We therefore awaited developments. In a very few minutes those long legs had brought him opposite the camp. He then seemed to see us, but instead of turning tail on his tracks he slightly diverged to the left. I fired at his shoulder, and with the one .303 bullet killed him dead on the spot. On examining him I found that his horns were not clean from their velvet. When the horns are growing, and until they are hard, the moose in this locality pass a great part of their time in the mountains above timber line, to avoid injury to the very sensitive horns whilst they are growing, and possibly also to avoid the attacks of insects, such as mosquitoes, only resorting to the woods and valleys so soon as the horn is hard and the time of rutting at hand.

My First Moose

This kill gave me the idea that I must not spend too much of my time after sheep if I was to be successful with moose, so I gave my knee some pretty severe work during the next four or five days, with the result that I nearly crocked up entirely, but managed to kill fifteen sheep in all, three whole skins of ewes and also of three rams being kept as specimens, which on my return I disposed of as follows : one pair I gave to the Victoria Natural History Museum, B.C., one pair to the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, which, by the way, were disgracefully cleaned, in fact, hardly cleaned at all, and one pair my taxidermist sold for me in Paris for a museum there. The rest of my heads I gave away, with the exception of three, which I kept for my own collection.

We had bad luck with both grizzly and black bears ; the country fairly swarmed with them, but my time was so short that I could not devote a whole week or ten days to their pursuit, as I did in the case of the sheep and moose. Had I been able to do so, I am sure I could have obtained all the bear I wanted, and I did want a very big one badly. Here, again, bad luck came in, for I did not get another shot at bears, except one at a black beast, which I might as well have missed, during the time I was in the mountains. "Prasnic" was the principal cause of my failure in this direction, for I should have

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been in the mountains at least seven weeks before I was able to get there.

Whilst on the subject of bears, it may be interesting to record that the Indians assert that both grizzlies and black bears are in the habit of eating a certain fungus, which acts as a purgative, prior to their denning up for the winter.

I did not want to kill any more sheep now, although had I wished to do so I could easily have obtained another twenty. There were plenty of them to be found in the mountains, but good heads were not too common, the rams I obtained being generally in ones or twos, and not in the company of the ewes and lambs.

One afternoon whilst on the mountains Hunter shot a cross fox, the fur of which was exactly the same as the silver, except about the top of the head and ears, which were reddish. This particular skin was quite a good one, but was not of any large commercial value because the animal was in its summer coat and had not yet put on its winter one. The trappers and Indians in this district maintained that the black or silver or cross foxes are but freaks in a red litter; that a vixen may have five cubs, one of which may be of the sort mentioned, or they may be all the prevalent colour, red. The prices paid for these skins became so high that several fox farms were started by enterprising settlers on the

The Lone Trail

neighbouring islands, where they were bred and fed on dried salmon. I did not hear of any very successful results, probably for the reason that in those days the industry was in its infancy. I can, however, imagine that things might easily go wrong, for foxes are never likely to thrive so well in an enclosure, however big it might be made. Mange and its attendant difficulties would come later, and a man might well hesitate before embarking money in a pursuit which is very much in the nature of a gamble.

CHAPTER XVI

Moose—Return to Kenai—Return to Tyonak—Am shipwrecked
—Return to Victoria, B.C.—A Shooting Trip to the Basin for
Sheep—A Touch of Nature—Return to England.

Do you know the world's white roof-tree—do you know that windy rift
Where the baffling mountain eddies chop and change?
Do you know the long day's patience, belly-down on frozen rift,
While the head of heads is feeding out of range?

RUDYARD KIPLING.

WE now hurried back to Moose Camp, making a short cut across the bare ground, saving ourselves some miles. Then, somehow or other, I lost the fore end of my double ejector .303. I had, I suppose, hit or pressed the spring against the wooden pack-saddle on which I carried my load. I did not find out my misfortune until a black bear feeding on some berries at the base of a perpendicular cliff came into view. My rifle was not loaded, for I never packed a load with cartridges in the chambers, as some accident might so easily occur.

I had given Hunter a Winchester, a .30-30, to which he had fitted Lyman sights, and he swore there were no sights like them—being used to them, I expect. Taking his rifle, I aimed at

Moose

the shoulder of the bear, and hit him low down in the hind quarter—a performance which fairly disgusted me, as it was the easiest of shots. I had never used these sights before, and made up my mind there and then never to do so again.

On arrival at camp I puzzled my brains to think out a plan by which I could use my own trusty rifle. Had I thought of it, I might have known that both hammers were cocked, and would have fired the cartridges, but I did not then think of it, nor did I do so until in the evening it suddenly struck me that I might cock the tumblers again by pressing the cocking-rods against a rock or hard piece of wood. I therefore pulled both triggers, hitting the strikers against a piece of wood held against them, to avoid injury, and hunting up a rock in the ground, with a steady push, found that with care I could cock the rifle in this way. Next morning, therefore, I started off with Hunter to search for a moose, on whose carcass I hoped to try the experiment of shooting without the fore end. We went towards the mountain, passing through the belt of black alder that marked the timber line. Here, a few hundred yards from the edge of the timber, we sat down. The country was spread out before us like a map, the wooded part in which the camp was situated being in a gentle incline. With my glass I could survey a

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large tract of country ; not very efficiently, as was proved a few minutes later, for a huge bull moose walked into the open through the black alder scrub to the left and below us. He was too far off to shoot at, being at least four hundred yards away. I watched him for some minutes through my glasses, the sun shining on those lovely horns of his, from which I could see portions of the velvet hanging in streamers. The horns were whitish in places, which proved that he had been amusing himself rubbing the velvet off against the bushes. Hunter and I waited for some time, hoping that this grand beast would move into a better position ; he was quite impossible where he was, for there was no sort of cover on either side of us, and I was loth to run the risk of wounding him by firing a long fluky shot. He turned to enter the alder. Now was our chance, and we hurried towards where he had disappeared, for his movements were so slow and deliberate that it was certain he had not seen us, and the wind was blowing in our faces. Arrived at the alder, we listened to hear him force his way through that tangle of brush, but there was not a sound—the earth might have opened and swallowed him up. How any beast of this enormous size, and with such a spread of horns, could force a way through this jungle fairly beat us, for it was with the greatest difficulty that I wormed my way through—the

Return to Kenai

branches twisted and stuck up at every imaginable angle.

After this we hunted the burnt country below my camp, going several miles without seeing anything but a porcupine, which Elia killed and took back to camp with him. I wanted, if possible, to get a barren cow moose, as I had promised to try and bring a pair of whole skins out for the Victoria (B.C.) local museum. I could have shot one or two with a calf at foot, but could not bring myself to do so. I thought that I might easily get one on my way back to the lake later on, but the opportunity did not occur. Had I not wanted one, the probability is I should have seen at least a dozen.

The next day I took Shanghai out on to the mountain side where we could spy the country. We were but a couple of miles from camp, and could do better here by watching than by wandering all over the woods. Unfortunately a very heavy mist suddenly came on, which turned to a steady drizzle lasting the whole day. This was too hopeless and annoying as my few days were slipping by fast. I should have to be at Kenai under ten days, as the *Bertha* was timed to make her last trip to the inlet for the winter, and I had engaged a schooner to take me from the village back to Tyonak in order to catch her. No one seemed at all certain whether she would arrive a few days earlier or

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later, and as I had no idea of putting in a winter at Kenai, I had therefore to be on the safe side and be at her port of call in plenty of time. I allowed myself four more days, therefore, before being obliged to return to the lake, and I began to fear lest I should fail to get a big moose after all. For although there may be plenty in the district it is fatal to success to have to hurry.

Hunter and I went out together one day to a point where a stream passed from the mountain, through the farthest end of the burnt timber land, and in a large hollow, surrounded by heavily timbered hills, we found a lake. Here evidence of moose was plentiful. In one place we found several fresh "stamping" places that had only recently been formed. These "stamping" places are shaped like a saucer, the diameter from edge to edge being about five feet, and the depth eighteen inches. A bull moose scrapes these holes in the ground with his fore-feet, leaving them trodden into a morass of clay and water. Some had evidently been made a day or more, whilst others were seemingly quite fresh. We moved now with the greatest caution, stopping to listen at every yard or so. The timber and bush was so thick in this spot that an animal would have been extremely hard to see even at twenty yards. We were thus moving around when Hunter heard something move on my right. Again the bushes shook, and in a

Return to Kenai

small opening appeared a cow, calf, and a magnificent bull moose. He was at the outside thirty yards from me, and standing broadside on. Throwing up the rifle, I fired at the centre of his huge shoulder, and was delighted to see him crash into the bushes stone dead. After the report the cow jumped a few feet, then remained still. Here, again, I could easily have shot my specimen, but refrained from doing so. I was delighted with my success. What a magnificent head! Before I would allow him to be touched I put a piece of stick at his heel, and another at his withers, and with a piece of string measured his height. When I afterwards taped this, it was exactly seven feet, the leg not even being pulled out straight. It was just as he fell.

Hunter and I had now a hard job to turn the beast over in order to skin out the head, for he had got jammed behind a log, and we had to use every ounce of strength to achieve our object. I had started skinning his grand neck when Hunter said, "There is another bull thrashing the bushes with its horns, on the hill we have come from." Now it suddenly struck me that I had got one cartridge undischarged, so I snatched up the rifle, took off the barrels, and hunted around for something to cock the hammers against. A birch tree was near, but on pressing it, the end of the stock sank two inches into the wood—it was rotten and dead. Then

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I found a rock in the ground which answered my purpose. This was all done in great hurry and excitement, for the other bull was still pounding the bushes like a fury, eighty yards away. It was the work of an instant to put another soft-nosed cartridge into the rifle and be ready again. I left Hunter to go on skinning out the head whilst I hurried back the way I had come. Half-way up the hill I stopped to listen. I was behind a tree, when suddenly a big bull moose put his head over a fallen log fifty yards away, and uphill of me. I could only see the front of his head as he faced me directly. Aiming at the centre of his forehead, I fired, and, as he turned, I hit him again in the neck. I was somewhat blown by my scramble, but felt that the beast was mine surely enough. I now scrambled up to where I had last seen him, and in the distance saw him struggling along, very sick. I hurried after him, and had perhaps gone two hundred yards when a rifle shot rang out. It seems that my two Indians, Elia and Shanghai, had been after moose meat to the sheep camp, and on returning met my wounded bull and finished him off. This was quite a good head, not so massive as the first I shot, nor so broad in the beam, but satisfactory to me. The first bullet had hit him on the right side of his big nose, about six inches above the nostril. He had evidently thrown up his head at the flash, and



MOOSE
Alces gigas



Return to Kenai

his head must have been at an angle as the bullet struck him. For instead of penetrating the skull it had glanced off the bone, and I found it under the scalp on his forehead. The second bullet hit him low down in the neck as he turned. A curious fact about these two heads was that both horns on the near side were malformed in almost identically the same way, probably from an injury when the horn was growing.

I now hurried back to Hunter to help him with the first head, whilst Elia and Shanghai did the honours for the second one. I found my guide, philosopher, and friend had more than three parts finished his gory task, but wanted help to sever the head from the neck. At last we got the neck and skull separated, and started back for camp, where we found the boys with the head they had brought in. The tongues and strips of meat from the haunches we hung up in the smoke of the fire in order to dry them ; the limbs of the trees over the fire were festooned with meat which would take a couple of days and nights to dry sufficiently to bear packing. The boys ate their porcupine, cooking it whole over the fire, first having burnt off the quills in the flames. It does not look a very appetizing morsel, and after tasting a bit of the hind quarter I decided that I much preferred moose, which is, I think, the finest meat I have ever eaten.

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On the following day Hunter and I again went in the direction where I had killed the two moose yesterday. I should not have attempted to kill another, unless I had happened upon a head that was distinctly better than the best I had, but I still wanted a whole skin and head for the museum at Victoria. This we were lucky enough to obtain that morning. The head was not quite so large, but was perfectly symmetrical in shape, and answered splendidly for the purpose to which I wished to put it. The skinning out of the whole of this carcass was a tremendous undertaking. I left the leg-bones of all the four legs up to the knees and hocks attached to the skin. Now, a green moose hide weighs a tremendous lot, and it puzzled us how to get it out of the country, for it must have scaled close on two hundred pounds. I know that I tried to lift it, and could only just manage to do so by exerting all my strength. Elia, when appealed to, solved the difficulty by offering to carry it out himself. I did not think this possible, but I did not know my Indian, nor what he was capable of doing. I promised him five dollars and a pair of new blankets if he succeeded in getting it so far as the lake, and he smiled as much as to say, "Money and blankets are already mine."

We had jerked (more or less dried) about one hundred pounds of splendid moose beef, which,

Return to Kenai

together with the tongues, I wanted to take home with me. The next day, therefore, the two Indians made a trip to the lake with a big load of stuff each, returning late in the evening. I had to be getting out soon if I meant to catch the steamer, so it was decided that we would leave our camp on the following morning. At an early hour the camp was all bustle, for we had a big day before us. Our loads were heavy enough, but Elia's was what Hunter would term a "fright." Not only was it of an awkward shape, but it must have measured three feet by three feet by two feet, which size caused it to hit and catch every snag, twig, and obstacle we met with. He arched his back into a hump, leaning very forward. He had straps of raw hide over his shoulders, and also one attached to the load which went round his forehead. The man himself was a slim little Indian, in height about five feet three inches, and his weight could not have been more than ten stone, if as much. Yet he tackled this load, and, what is more, succeeded in taking it down to the lake as he had agreed to do.

We arrived back at Dawson's hut by midday, and after a good lunch put the two boats back into the water, loaded them, and started for an Indian shack that Hunter knew of some few miles down the river from the lake, arriving about an hour before dark, and passed the night

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there. The next morning we started down the river, the stream not being nearly so strong or so high as when we came up it. I sat in the stern of the boat, facing the bows, with a pair of short sculls in my hands, whilst Shanghai pulled the longer oars in the ordinary way, Hunter and Elia having charge of the other boat. In the stream we were continually having to dodge rocks that just showed their ugly heads above water—this is where the short oars I used were of assistance. When it was necessary for Shanghai to cease rowing, I could, with a sharp push with one or other of my oars, avoid these obstacles successfully. Once my big boat nearly came to grief, for I hit a sunken rock heavily, which shook us up badly from stem to stern. The boat hung for a few moments fast on the rock, but when the current swung her stern round, she floated off again without doing us any serious harm. About midday we came to the rapids. It was not possible to steer the boats down these foaming torrents, so the long tow-rope was made fast, and we let down each boat separately. It was an awkward place to negotiate at any time, for the water close in was very shoal, and where it suddenly grew deeper the waves were uncomfortably big. We let down my boat first. I grounded three or four times slightly, but not sufficiently fast to prevent my pushing her off with an oar. At one place

Return to Tyonak

when I was pushing the boat's stern off she went into the rough water broadside on, and shipped quite a lot of water, but she was well held above by the rope, a turn of which had been taken round the bole of a tree lest it should be dragged from the men's hands. This was the worst place we had to encounter, although many other places had to be taken with great care. The trip from the Indian shack to the village of Kenai took us just over twelve hours—we were up at the house just as it was getting dark, the gear being brought up by the Indians. The skins and heads were hung up in a lock-up house on the beach.

Next day I heard that my schooner had arrived to take me up to Tyonak, and I went down to interview the owner, who I thought looked somewhat "tough," as though he had been making a night of it. In answer to my inquiry as to when he proposed to sail, he said, "This afternoon, if it will suit you."

Now that the time had come to say good-bye to Hunter I was sad. We had been the very best of friends during all these long months, and I had got to like his straight honest ways of speech; one gets to know a man very well when you spend several months in his company.

It did not take long to get my belongings on that dirty schooner. The cabin was a poky, beastly hole with two bunks, that were taken

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possession of by the captain and his mate. I was supposed to lie on the floor, which perhaps I was not averse to doing, for I did not like the state of the bunks. I had a great send-off, the Indians and white men waving their farewells as we hoisted our sails and stood up the inlet.

It was late in the afternoon when we came to the West Arm, a promontory that jutted into the sea. Here the skipper decided to anchor for the night, as there was a fresh breeze blowing, and we should have had a dead beat to windward had we stood on. I remarked to him that the sunset was a very stormy one, and that we were in for a blow in the morning, which prophecy was more than fulfilled.

Some time was spent in taking in two reefs in the sails next morning; then we started. The farther we went the harder it blew, until there was half a gale. The seas ran high on account of the shoal water, and we were making very bad weather of it. The voyage lasted the entire day, and I was heartily sick of it when we brought up off the village of Tyonak. Here it was quite impossible to land, for no boat could have approached the beach. It was a miserable experience, and to make matters worse the lazy fool of a man had not given his boat enough chain on which to ride easily. The result was that she kept bumping about in a most uncomfortable way, and finally she dragged her anchor,

Shipwrecked

bringing up at intervals with a jerk. I thought it was about time to expostulate, and suggested his giving her another shackle of chain to ease her, which, however, he declined to do, knowing that he would have extra trouble in getting it in again should he have done so. When it was dark I told him he ought, seeing that the steamer might come in any minute, to put up his riding light, but this remark he sneered at too, so I left him to his own devices. I did not get to sleep until past twelve that night. Whilst my two companions snored like hogs in their bunks, I was kept awake by the anchor dragging. At last, as it seemed to cease, I dropped off to sleep, and it could only have been for a couple of hours before I was awakened by the horrible sound a ship makes when she takes the ground. This effectually woke up the men. Here we were, broadside on to the beach, with every gigantic sea pounding us, and lifting the ship farther on to the rocks. Thank goodness ! we had struck on the top of the tide, and were therefore close up to the steep cliffs which towered above us. It was my turn now, and I rubbed it into that pair of land-lubbers for their gross carelessness and laziness. They were very humble, and asked me what I meant to do. I told them I was going to try and get ashore. It is curious what small things make an impression on one under these conditions,

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for I remember that as I hung on to the lee rigging, the seas, after hitting the boat, rose high in the air, nearly knocking me down, and the water that fell on my bare head parted my hair. I had no intention of remaining where I was, as a pounding such as we were experiencing would soon break up any craft, and therefore let myself down over the side nearest the land, hanging on like grim death to the rail. I could touch the beach, but the under-tow took me off my feet every time the waves receded. I then climbed on board again and got hold of a long sweep or oar, which at the first favourable opportunity I used as a vaulting pole, landing in quite shallow water. I was in a pitiable state, wet through to the skin, and the night as dark as pitch. I had no idea how far it was back to Tyonak, but I scrambled along that rocky beach until I came to an opening in the cliff. Here I found an Indian shack, the inhabitants of which I knocked up, and persuaded an old squaw to make me a cup of tea, which she kindly did, but of which I had to partake without milk or sugar. This warmed me up, and I then set out to walk the twelve miles, as it turned out, to Tyonak. What a night, and how I blessed those two men ! That was the cruellest walk I ever undertook, for I had to wade streams, stumble over rocks, fall down and get up so often that I somehow did these things auto-

Shipwrecked

matically. At last I arrived at Matson's house and knocked at the door; a voice said, "Who's there?" On hearing who I was the good old man jumped out of bed and, after helping me out of my wet clothes, insisted on my getting into his warm bed, whilst he busied himself in making me some hot soup. He kept muttering aloud between his questions and my answers as to the disaster, that he knew those silly some-things would do it. I was anxious for my skins and trophies, to say nothing of my gun and rifle, which were in the hold of the schooner. "Now don't you worrit over anything," the old man said; "me and the boys will fix things up to-morrow."

I had bought a nice lot of prime fur just before leaving Kenai, which consisted of three grey wolves' skins, eighteen magnificent beaver pelts, six marten skins, and two beautiful silver fox skins; and these, together with my own skins, would, I knew, suffer dreadfully by contact with the salt water. However, it was no use worrying, so being dead-beat I soon dropped off to sleep, whilst my kind host slept on the floor. Next morning I had to stay in bed until my clothes were dried out. In the meanwhile Matson went up to the Indian village and collected all the natives he could get hold of. He also pressed into his service six white men who were waiting for the s.s. *Bertha*

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in order to return to Seattle. By a coincidence it happened that these were some of those whom I had helped to pack their lumber some months previously on my arrival in the country. Hearing that I was in trouble, they came along immediately, and it was almost worth the disaster to experience the kindness one and all showered on me.

The wind had dropped by noon, and it was now possible to launch a boat, with which Matson and some of these men visited the schooner. They found her a total wreck, the hatches burst off, and the hold full of water. They managed to bring back with them all my gear of every description, and at once set to work to save what they could. The fur, hides, and skins were handed over to the Indians, who after thoroughly washing each pelt in fresh water to take out the salt and mud, dried them again. The white men spent the whole day in taking my gun, rifle, and revolver to pieces, washing the parts, then drying and vaselining them, so that my loss in the end was practically nothing, with the exception of my camera, which was ruined and some photograph plates, about twenty-four dozen of which I had exposed, and had rolled up in several layers of red flannel. The wet had stuck the edges of these plates together, making them into one solid lump. A young man in the party, by the

Return to Victoria, B.C.

greatest care, managed to soak them apart, and to develop about sixteen dozen of them, for which I was very grateful. Unfortunately the damaged plates were mostly of the white sheep and moose, those I valued most, but I was lucky to save any at all under the circumstances.

The steamer was four days overdue, which was a blessing, for I could not have got my skins dried out at all had she been up to time. I bought an excellent ·30-40 Winchester rifle from Matson before we parted, which I used in British Columbia later on. I gave him several small things as mementoes, for he absolutely refused to accept payment in any shape or form for all his kindnesses to me. There a man is taken for what he is, a millionaire could not buy these men's help. It is the only place I have ever been in where neither money, birth, nor position counted for anything.

On the arrival of the *Bertha*, I got my belongings on board, and so soon as possible hung up my sheepskins and moose hide on the back stays, to enable them to dry out thoroughly. I was most fortunate in the weather, which continued fine and bright for four days, otherwise it is certain some of the hair of the moose and sheep hides would have slipped. As it was I got them down to Victoria in good condition, where they were thoroughly well looked after by Mr. Fannin, the curator of the museum, who was delighted

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with the presents I had brought him. The moose and sheep were eventually set up by him, and are now to be seen in that museum.

There was rather a stir in big-game circles over my success with these sheep, for they had never been brought to Europe before, and were even new to Fannin, although he had heard of them. The result was that some of my friends, and others, took an early opportunity of visiting Kenai and Kusiloff to obtain the heads they required. My friend Captain Radclyffe has made three, or more, trips to Alaska after the bear, moose, and sheep, and has written an interesting book on this particular country, which is the standard work on the subject. Hunter, I am glad to say, has not forgotten me, for he writes pretty regularly in the spring and fall of the year, telling me his news. He found a placer gold mine near Mount McKinley, which he worked satisfactorily, and sent me, in a registered letter, eight or nine small nuggets as proof of his success.

After spending a week or so in Victoria, I determined to go back to England, as I had now been away for nearly eighteen months. I still wanted a good Rocky Mountain sheep, so arranged to make a short trip to a place called the Basin, which is reached by leaving the main C.P.R. line at Ashcroft. A friend of mine wanted to accompany me, so we started together

A Shooting Trip to the Basin for Sheep in the latter end of October. On arriving at Ashcroft, we took the coach for Clinton, where we engaged an Indian, a half-breed, and a Chinaman, called Sing, as cook. The Indian had pack-horses and necessary tackle, whilst I had the camp outfit. After rather a long and wearisome journey, which took us three days, and in the course of which we had to swim our pack and riding horses across the Fraser River, we arrived in a valley where goats were supposed to be numerous. I did not want to kill any more of these animals, having already obtained four of them some months before, but as my companion had never obtained one, we spent a couple of days here, and I killed several black-tailed deer, one of which had a pretty although not a large head.

The season was getting late now to be in the mountains, and the cold was intense. The second morning after our arrival at the goat camp, I asked Sing what the day was like, to which he replied, "Heap snow live, Mr. Tudley—damn cold!" It is, I believe, quite an unusual thing to get a Chinaman to come into the woods. They are first-class servants for the house, but draw the line at camping out. However, this man proved worth his weight in gold. I had given him a couple of blankets, but thinking, or rather knowing, that he would be cold even with these, and feeling that he would not

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relish living cheek by jowl with the Indians, I told him he might sleep at the foot of my bed in our tent, and could pull the ends of my big blankets over him too, if necessary. This tickled Sing to death, and I believe after that he would have done anything for me. I will admit that I was not altogether unselfish over the matter, as his body kept my feet splendidly warm, so that we were both satisfied.

We were now to go to the Basin, but the loss of one of our pack-horses delayed us for several hours. It seemed that the poor brute had fallen down the river bank, and owing to being hobbled was unable to get back again. The Indian found it after a lot of trouble half a mile away on a sand-spit; we could not, owing to this delay, make the Basin that night, so had to camp *en route*. The wind nearly cut one in half, the cold being extreme, at least twenty degrees below zero, so much so that the butter, milk, and meat were frozen solid; the two former had to be thawed out before they could be used, whilst the meat had to be cut off in chips with an axe. Next day we arrived at our destination, and tossed up a coin for choice of ground, agreeing to take the best part of the country alternately. I lost the toss, and went into the country at the back of my camp. After a lot of walking I came to a bluff in a little valley, where, beneath me, I saw

A Touch of Nature

seven ewes and a small ram. I had killed two better rams long since, so determined to leave this fellow alone, and as the afternoon was drawing to a close I gave up any idea of looking for any other sheep, and sat down to watch the animals with my glasses for half an hour. They were dotted about on the flat ground peacefully chewing the cud, when I noticed one of the ewes get up and face a small creek. A few seconds later a coyote put in an appearance close to her, whether for sport or because he wanted to frighten her, I cannot tell, but it seemed to me as I watched from above that the former was decidedly the case; for he kept running at the ewe, behaving exactly as a dog will do whilst at play. This went on for some minutes, when the ram thought it time to interfere. He trotted towards his enemy, and when within twenty yards stopped, stamping his foot, after which he charged the coyote for all he was worth. Of course the latter had no sort of difficulty in getting out of the way, and took up his position again a few yards off, lying down with his head on his paws. Again the ram charged, only to be avoided as before. This went on for some ten minutes, until the coyote seemed to tire of the game and disappeared into the creek bottom. It is curious that the rest of the ewes took little or no notice of this little performance, for they did not even take

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the trouble to get up on to their legs. It was a most interesting thing to watch from my coign of vantage, and as I turned away to go back to camp, I noticed that the ewe that had been attacked had lain down again, and the ram was peacefully grazing close by.

Next day it was my turn to try the mountain in front of us. Having spied a nice bunch of sheep nearly on the top of the hill, I made a detour to get above them for a stalk. This took a long time, as the climbing was very stiff. After working hard for an hour or more, I had spotted the flock, in which there was one excellent ram. I left the half-breed behind me now, and started to try my luck. I managed to crawl to within eighty yards, then on inspection found that the ram was lying down. He had a lovely head, which I envied as I watched him through my glasses. Nothing could be done; I had to wait until he got up. Suddenly the whole lot jumped to their feet and started at a headlong pace down and across the hill—I was sure they had not seen or winded me. I now stood up, and my disgust was beyond expression when I saw my companion and that brute of an Indian calmly strolling along at the foot of the mountain. To say that I was angry would be futile, I was furious that they should have taken this direction when they should have left it to me for the day. The half-breed and I continued our



ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAM
Ovis montana

A Touch of Nature

walk on the top of the hill, whilst the other two strolled along the bottom. I was still in a frantically bad humour when I saw two splendid rams coming up the hill straight towards me. Just in front of me was an old tree-trunk with the roots torn out of the ground, and behind this I lay until those sheep walked up one behind the other, till within twenty yards of me, when I fired, and missed both without touching a hair—better that than wounding them. My cup was now quite full, and I almost wished I had never been out shooting in my life! My half-breed was quite nice about it, and persuaded me to have one more try. After a bit I swallowed my disappointment. We must have gone another mile when the Fates willed it that I should find another good ram. He was feeding by himself in an excellent place for a stalk, and was about three hundred yards away. I had time during the stalk to get over my ill-humour, so that when I eventually reached a spot eighty yards from him, I had no difficulty in knocking him over with one bullet. This head was what I had been looking for so long a time. It was sixteen and a quarter inches round the base of the horn, and although the tips of the horns were badly broken from fighting, yet the head was a beauty and quite characteristic. It did not compare, though, with the two I had so disgracefully missed—they were magnificent, they always are

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when you don't get them ! The next thing that happened almost seems to be incredible, but the fact remains that I had only just finished taking off the head from the beast I had killed when who should put in an appearance below us, and coming up the hill, but my hunting companion and his Indian ! Of course it did not now matter much. I had obtained a head and that was all I wanted, but how in the world the Indian had the audacity to deliberately attempt to spoil my day's sport in this manner I could not make out. The white man, of course, apologized most sincerely for the part he had so unwittingly played, and I know that he was unaware he was trespassing, but the Indian understood well enough, for he had been over the ground, or at least some of it, the previous day. One might as well have talked to a lump of coal as to this man, although I was aided in my efforts by the half-breed who accompanied me. I fancy from what I could gather that later on in the evening some pretty plain talking took place between them, the honours, I should say, resting with my man, if the Indian's expression was any index to his feelings.

I went in quite a different direction next day, hoping that by going farther afield I might find one or other of my big sheep, but they seemed to have left this part of the country altogether. I came upon a bunch of ewes and lambs, amongst

Return to England

which were two rams whose horns were small. As I did not propose to shoot one I amused myself by watching them for some time—it was interesting to see the two rams playing at fighting. They stood close to each other, and both simultaneously rose on their hind legs; then instantly their horns met with a crash. I would have given a lot to see a really fine pair of old rams have a battle, but no such luck came my way; they were evidently keeping by themselves in twos and threes, good enough friends for the time being, and until the eternal female entered into their lives to stir up strife and jealousy.

I shot a black-tail deer or two whilst in this camp, and poisoned several coyotes with strychnine—I wanted the skins of the latter for a rug. These beasts it is good to destroy by any means in your power, for they are a great nuisance and do a lot of damage to the settlers in the country. The worst of it is that they are so extremely shy and wary that trapping makes little or no impression on their numbers, whereas poison is picked up and bolted quite freely, and their destruction is accomplished speedily without the suffering entailed by the animal's struggles whilst in an iron trap.

I kept two of the haunches of the sheep I killed, intending to take these back to England. The weather was so cold that I could easily

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have managed this, the meat being frozen as solid as stone. Unfortunately, however, when I put it on board the steamer on my way to England, the butcher kept it on the ice, having no freezing chamber, with the result that the meat thawed out, and to avoid entire waste I had to have it cooked. It was served in the saloon one night for dinner, and was a novelty to many of the passengers, all of whom enjoyed their first taste of genuine wild mutton.

I was not particularly keen now to remain out in the mountains much longer, for the cold was intense at night. The sheep seemed to have forsaken their haunts entirely, and we only obtained a few black-tail deer. Accordingly we returned once more to civilization, and I made my way home to England.

CHAPTER XVII

Iceland—Salmon Fishing—A French Sportsman—Ryper—
Gerfalcons.

It may be that Fate will give me life and leave to row once more—
Set some strong man free for fighting as I take awhile his oar.
But to-day I leave the galley. Shall I curse her service, then?
God be thanked—whate'er comes after, I have lived and toiled with
Men!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

I NOW come to my last trip—to Iceland, in H.M.S. *Bellona*, commanded by my friend Captain Grant Dalton, with whom I had been so many weeks in bygone years on the West Coast of Africa.

We called in at Leith on our way from Portsmouth, and next morning sailed for Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. There we were boarded by Mr. Vidalin, an Iceland, who was the British Consul. He was generosity itself, and provided ponies for anybody who wanted one, in fact, was at the beck and call of all hands.

Grant Dalton was given the fishing in the Ellardaa River, which is owned by an Englishman, a little stream swarming with salmon and sea trout, not very big salmon—twelve pounds

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being the weightiest we caught—but infinitely sporting fish, which would rise at any small silver-bodied fly, such as a Dusty Miller, Wilkinson, or silver-grey. Some sort of a fish would rise at every cast until the sport became monotonous.

I had as gillie one of the crew of the captain's galley, and he had never previously gaffed a fish, but was keen as mustard to do his best. The first try was a hideous failure—he missed the salmon and struck a lump of lava instead, with the result that the point of the gaff was turned and bent. However, it was not long before the "handy man" learned his job, and very soon I had a gillie quick as lightning, who clipped the fish in great style.

On one day we had the fish piled up in three heaps at various parts of the river banks, and when the time came to stop, the question was how to move the plunder to the fishing-hut a mile away. The "handy man" to the rescue! He put his oilskin coat on the ground and filled it with shining fish, tying them up with a cord, and packed the trouser legs of my oilskins after adroitly fastening their ends. It took two trips each before we had all the bag brought in. A great day's sport, and an experience worth having, although nothing like so alluring as the uncertainty attached to ordinary salmon fishing, when you may kill one or more fish in a hard

A French Sportsman

day's work, or may not even get a rise. The one would soon pall on me, whereas the other would never do so !

We had several more days' excellent sport on this grand little river, but did not again manage to account for so many fish in one day.

An amusing incident happened on this river during our stay. A French training-ship put in to Reykjavik, and some of the officers went ashore with their guns to get some shooting. One sportsman happened on this river, and when he arrived at the Foss, which is situated only a quarter of a mile from the sea, he saw a lot of salmon leaping the falls to ascend the river. This was a chance not to be missed, so he promptly set to and *shot* twelve fine fish, retrieving them in due course as they were carried over a shallow below. The river watcher came upon him as he was indulging in this pastime. Mutual explanations followed, then the Frenchman lifted his hat and departed—minus the fish !

The *Bellona* was sent up to Iceland on Fishery Protection duties, for the trawlers that sail from England require looking after in various ways. Our ship, therefore, had to move about from place to place for this purpose. We often put into various fjords for a day or night. It was then that Grant Dalton and I got many a

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good day's shooting after snipe, golden plover, and ducks. At one place there was a small river that was situated about four miles from where the ship lay. I went over one day to try for some trout. In my fly-book I always carried a few salmon flies. On this occasion I killed on this stream three salmon with my ten-foot trout rod. They were great sport, and I think I was more pleased with the result than I was on the day I got thirty-six fish on the bigger river.

Close to Reykjavik there is a boiling spring, where the women of the town are in the habit of washing their clothes. A shocking accident happened to a woman one day when we were at this place, for she slipped into the water and was so badly scalded that she died. It seems that the bank surrounding this pool had become so greasy owing to the soap used in washing that this unfortunate slipped down the bank into the water.

Iceland is an odd place—there are no trees at all, and very little bush. What struck me most during a trip we made to the north of the island was the number of craters of extinct volcanoes that outcrop all over the sides of the mountains. We must have passed hundreds of them.

We heard that we could obtain some good ryper shooting by going inland, so we made up a party of four for a little trip. We stayed at a

Ryper

farmer's house for the nights we remained away from the ship. On the first day we shot sixty brace of these birds, and on the second day sixty-one and a half brace. We had two ponies laden down with this game, which we took back to the ship with us, when the birds were divided among the different messes on board. This proved to be a treat for the men, as ryper make most excellent eating.

I bought a cast (two) of nestling Iceland falcons, which I hooded; these I brought back to England with me, intending to train them. I had them so tame that in three weeks after my arrival home I had one flying loose and stooping to the lure brilliantly. Unfortunately one afternoon I lost her as she took after a wild pigeon that passed the field where I was flying her. I did not see her again, although I drove all over the country-side in order to take her up. This all came about from trying to hurry her on too much. I had but a month in which to train her before I was due to return to London. The other falcon I gave to a man who kept her in a large aviary, where he moulted her out for several seasons, but did not attempt to fly her.

I spent seven weeks altogether on board the *Bellona*, enjoying every minute of the time. I had to take a passage home in a Danish steamer. This boat was crowded with passengers, so

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much so, that beds had to be made up in the after-hold for many of those who otherwise would have been left behind. I thought I was doing something wonderfully smart by offering one of the engineers a sovereign for the use of his cabin. He was good enough to consent to this, but said, "I should keep the light burning throughout the night if I were you!" On being asked why, he told me that there were such things as bugs (my pet aversion), and that so long as a light was about they would not put in an appearance. I had already paid my sovereign, which I now decided to lose without taking advantage of his hospitality, and therefore slept, or rather tried to do so, on the floor of the smoking-room.

On my arrival in Leith I had to pass through Edinburgh on my way south, and remained in that city for the night. I was very much amused by the remarks made by various passengers and others who had never seen a cast of hooded falcons on their box cadge before. Some suggested they were peacocks, and others thought they must be parrots. I got weary at length of saying what the birds were, for they did not seem ever to have heard of falconry.

It may be that my travels and big-game days are finished, that there is nothing left to me but memories and the trophies on the wall, but

Gerfalcons

those days and nights spent “far from the madding crowd” were the happiest of my life.

For good undone and gifts misspent and resolutions vain,

’Tis somewhat late to alter; this I know—

Could I live the same life over, I should live the same again,

And the chances are I go where most men go.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

THE END



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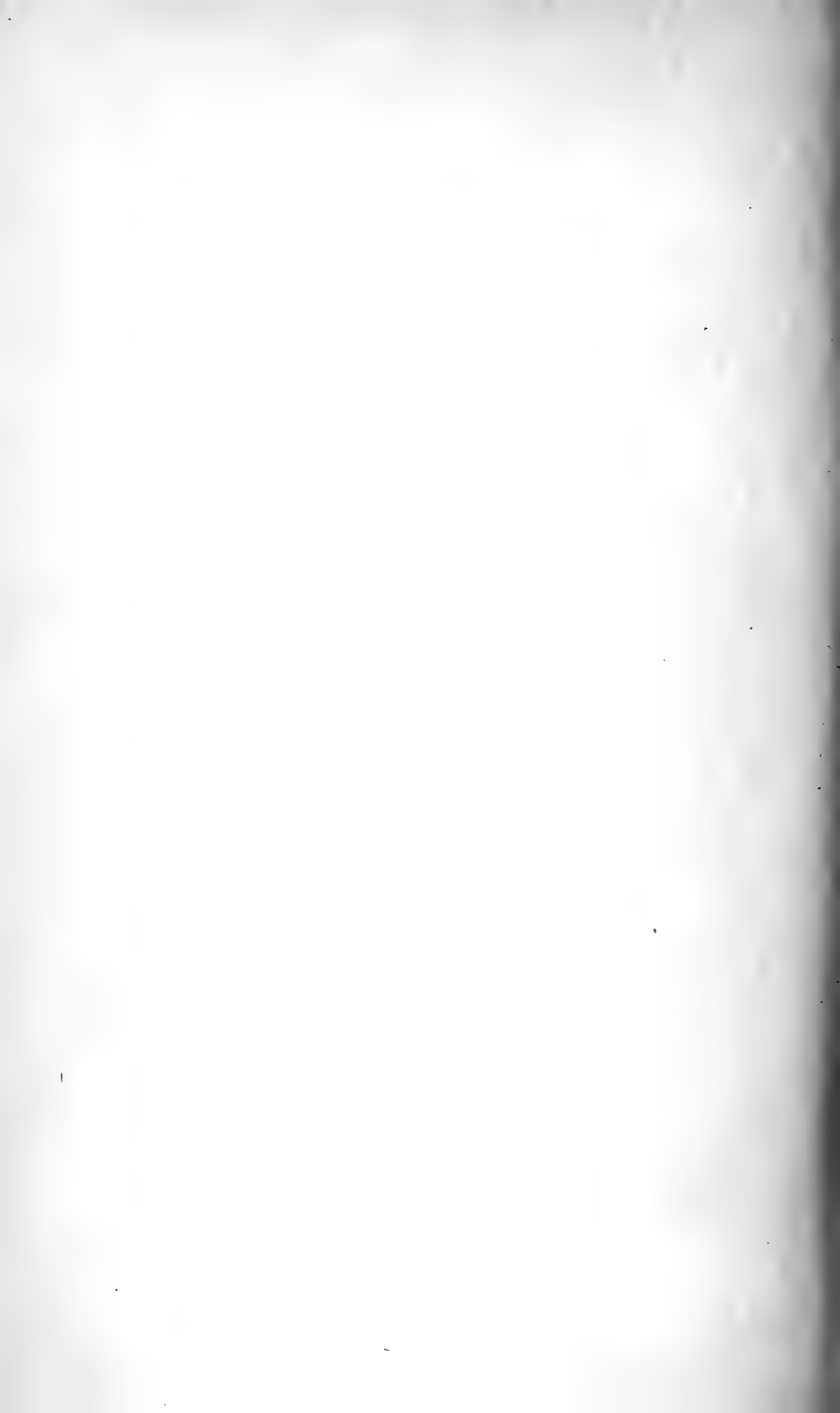
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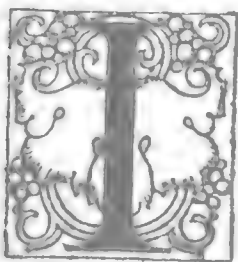
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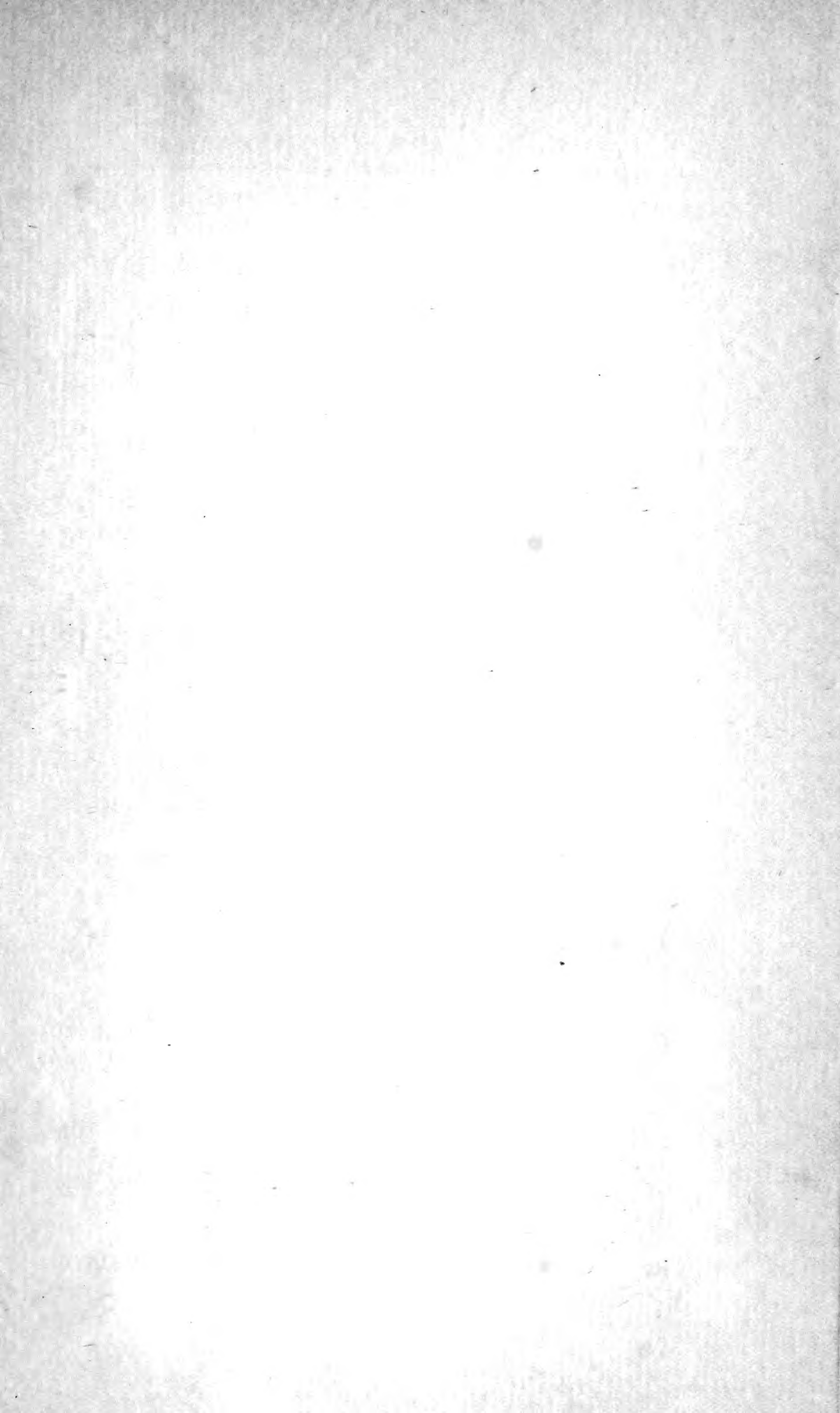
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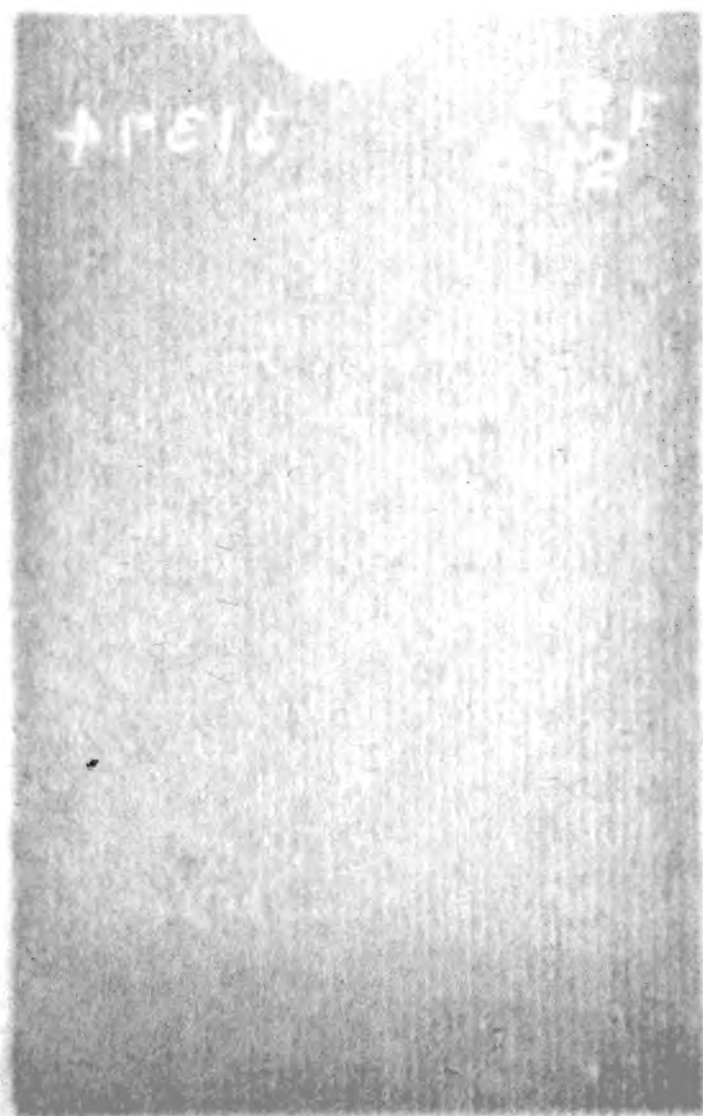
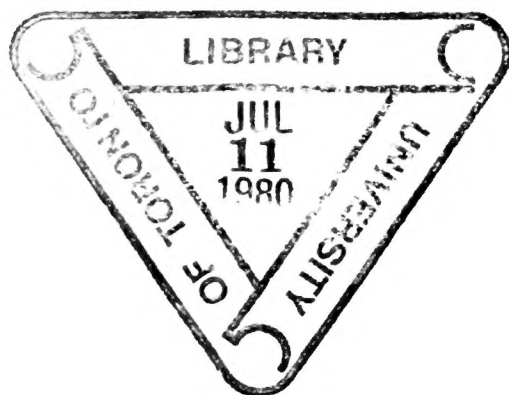
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